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DRAMATICS

The Educational Magazine for Directors, Teachers, and Students of Dramatic Arts

Vol. XVIII, No. 5

FEBRUARY, 1947

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DRAMA CONFERENCES

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COVER PICTURE

Scene from *The Bells of St. Clara*, a production of the Visitation High School (Thespian Troupe 287), Chicago, Ill. Directed by Howard L. Rooney. (Left to right) Anne Marie Scanlon as Tina, Rita Hello as Bertha, and Carolyn Fleckenstein as Katerin.

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MAGAZINE

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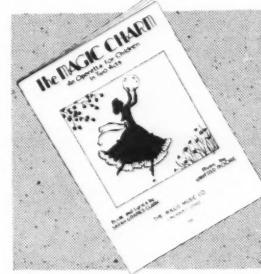
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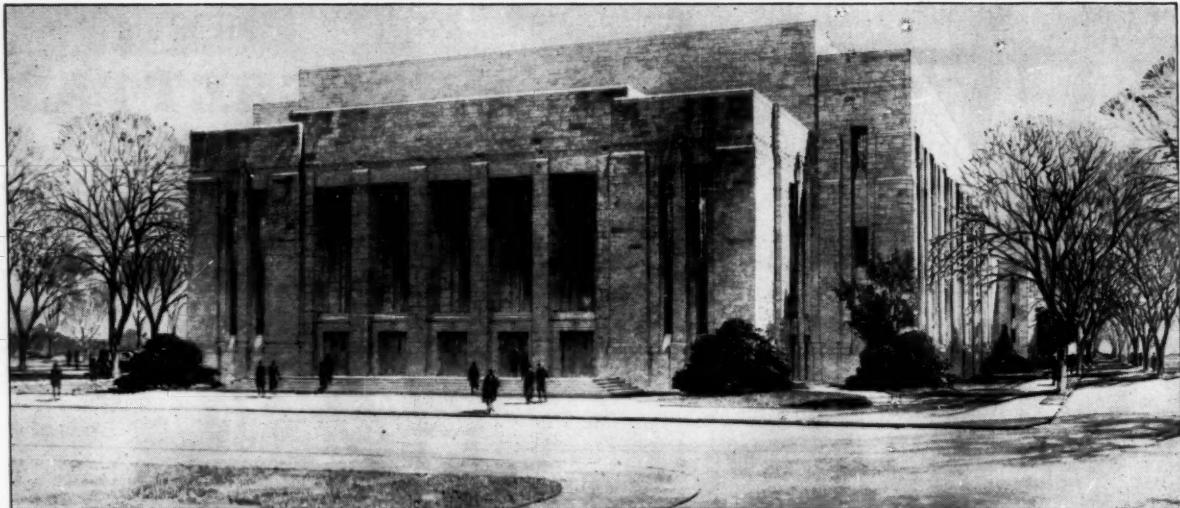
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Theatre and Auditorium Building on the campus of Indiana University where teachers and students from all parts of the country will convene for the Second National Dramatic Arts Conference, June 16 through 21, 1947.

Second National Drama Conferences

Scheduled for June 16 through 21 at Indiana University

NATION-wide attention among students, teachers, and dramatics directors at all educational levels will be focused during the coming months upon preparations which are already well advanced for two major conferences scheduled for June 16 through 21 at Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana.

With the co-operation of the University Theatre, The National Thespian Society will sponsor its Second National Dramatic Arts Conference which is expected to attract an even larger gathering of theatre workers than that which greeted the first conference in 1941. While the Conference will be sponsored primarily for the advancement of dramatic arts in the secondary schools, the program of speakers, discussions, and demonstrations will be designed to benefit theatre workers at all levels. Admission will be open to students, teachers, and directors in high schools, colleges, and community theatres.

Meeting concurrently with the Dramatic Arts Conference on the Indiana University campus will be the Second National Children's Theatre Conference of the Children's Theatre Committee of The American Educational Theatre Association. Some three hundred representatives are expected to be present for the children's theatre program of talks, discussions, and demonstrations.

Especially attractive to those who will attend the conferences are the excellent facilities for large meetings provided by Indiana University. The many beautiful buildings on the campus form a community in themselves, free from the disturbances of heavy city traffic and noise. Conference members will be housed in the spacious dormitories and in the Indiana Union Building and

Annex. The well furnished rooms in the dormitories are ideal for sleep and rest during off-conference hours.

In the center of the campus stands the Indiana Union, an imposing building of Indiana limestone, given to the University in memory of its war dead. On the main floor of the Union are generous lounge facilities for social and recreational activities. On this same floor is found Alumni Hall with its ample facilities for meetings. Many of the principal meetings of the Children's Theatre Conference will be held in Alumni Hall.

The Union Cafeteria on the floor below Alumni Hall is well equipped and staffed to provide meals for over three hundred persons at a time. Delegates to the conferences can look forward to securing expertly prepared meals at rates well below those charged elsewhere.

Equally attractive to delegates will be

the Theatre and Auditorium Building, completed in 1941, where all major sessions of the Dramatic Arts Conference will be held. The Auditorium has a seating capacity well over three thousand, with stage facilities superior to those found in many of our best equipped professional theatres. All major dramatic performances scheduled for the conferences will be given in the Auditorium. The Theatre, with a seating capacity of four hundred, will be used for demonstrations on scene designing and stage lighting.

Registration for the two conferences will be held in Alumni Hall from 9:00 a. m. to 10:00 p. m., Monday, June 16. A tour of the Theatre and Auditorium Building is scheduled for 4:00 p. m. that same day. That afternoon will also see the opening session of the Children's Theatre Conference. Informal receptions will follow late in the afternoon. All conference delegates will be guests at a performance of a new play scheduled for 8:00 p. m. that evening by the Sycamore Players of State Teachers College, Terre Haute, Indiana.

On Tuesday, June 17, the Dramatic Arts Conference will get underway with a major address on "The Theatre and the Brotherhood of Man," given by a representative from UNESCO. At 10:15 a. m. the conference will break up into sectional groups. Students will attend meetings planned especially for them in the various classrooms in the University Theatre Department. These meetings will be devoted to discussions, led by experts on acting, radio, motion picture, and theatre designing. Teachers and directors will attend demonstrations on directing and designing. All group meetings scheduled for this day will be continued on Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday.

The first of the afternoon events will be a demonstration on directing the one-act play. This demonstration will be continued on Wednesday and Thursday. Each day will see the performance of two one-act plays, presented by outstanding high school casts especially

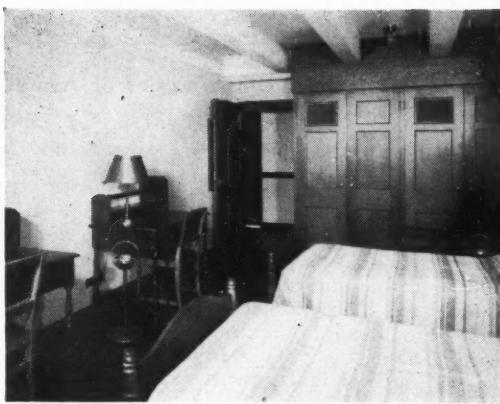


Interior of the Auditorium where many of the Conference sessions will be held. The Auditorium has a seating capacity of over 3,000.



Expertly prepared meals at modest rates will be furnished conference members by the Indiana Union Cafeteria shown at left.

Conference members will be housed in attractively furnished dormitory rooms such as the one shown at right. Room rates per day are 75c for students and \$1.50 for adults.



chosen for this purpose. A round-table discussion, led by expert theatre directors, will follow. The late afternoon session will be devoted to a series of demonstrations on stage lighting.

On the night of Tuesday, June 17, delegates will be guests at the performance of a three-act play, presented by the Players of Berea College. Wednesday night delegates will be guests at a performance of a children's play, presented by the Civic Theatre of Indianapolis. Thursday night's play, *The Rivals*, will be given by the Indiana University Theatre.

Friday afternoon, June 21, delegates to the two conferences will attend a performance of a new children's play in the Auditorium, given by the Champaign, Ill., High School under the direction of Marion Stuart. The performance will be analyzed by a panel composed of outstanding children's theatre directors. The Dramatic Arts Conference banquet will be held that evening, followed by a dance in Alumni Hall.

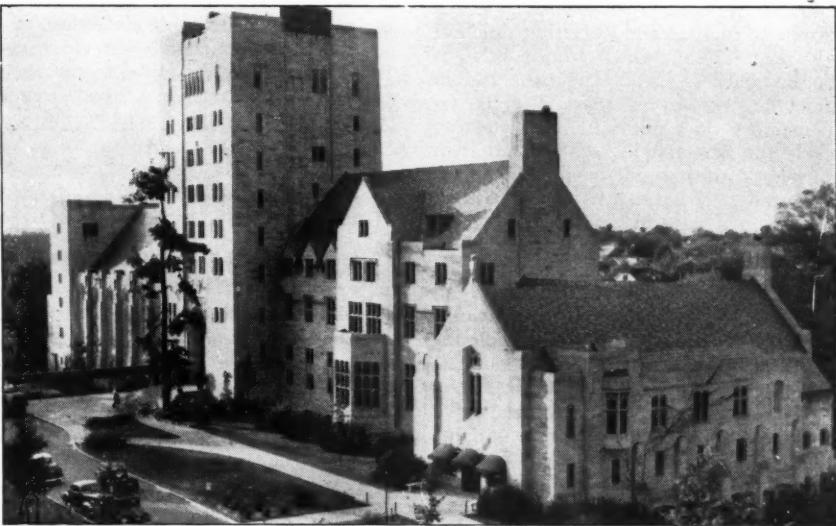
The program scheduled for Saturday morning will open with a demonstration on make-up, presented by experts from one of the country's outstanding manufacturers of make-up supplies. At 11:00 a. m. delegates will be privileged to witness an original one-half hour dramatic broadcast, with the cast composed of high school students attending the conference. The broadcast will be presented by Station WLW of Cincinnati, Ohio, and the NBC network.

Because of the large number of people expected to attend the Dramatic Arts Conference, plans are being made for pre-registration to begin April 1. The registration fee for all conference events excepting the banquet will be \$4.00 for students and \$5.00 for adults. Registration forms and room reservation cards may be secured after March 15 from The National Thespian Society, College Hill Station, Cincinnati, Ohio.

CHILDREN'S THEATRE CONFERENCE

THE Second National Conference of the Children's Theatre Committee of the American Educational Theatre Association will be held concurrently with the National Dramatic Arts Conference on the Indiana University campus, June 16 through 21. Headquarters for the Children's Theatre Conference will be in the popular Indiana Union Building. The Children's Conference will bring together representatives from all parts of the country for discussions, conferences, and demonstrations on all phases of children's theatre activities. An extremely interesting program of speakers is now being prepared by the Committee under the direction of its chairman, Virginia Lee Comer. Further particulars may be obtained by writing to Miss Comer in care of the Association of Junior Leagues, Waldorf-Astoria, New York City.

The Children's Theatre Conference program will be published in the May issue of this magazine.



The Indiana Union Building was given to Indiana University in memory of its war dead. Within this beautiful structure students and teachers who will attend the Second National Dramatic Arts Conference and the Second National Children's Conference will find ample facilities for their social and recreational activities. The Conference registration headquarters will be in this building.

Directing the One-Act Drama

The Fourth in a Series of Articles on the One-Act Play

By TALBOT PEARSON

Department of Drama, Carnegie Institute of Technology, Pittsburgh, Pa.

IN the article, "Choosing the One-Act Play," published in the December issue of this magazine, I offered two examples of short plays which I considered well worth the time and effort of production. It was not by accident that both of these were dramas in the strict sense of the word. Drama, as distinct from comedy, tragedy, farce or fantasy, is the easiest of all to play or produce. It calls for fewer technical accomplishments on the part of the actors, it is concerned with emotion rather than intellect, and it evokes a more immediate response from an audience because of its inherent simplicity and honesty.

Alexander Dean has said that a dramatist's concept must deal fundamentally with man in relation to greater forces, such as the laws of God and man. Both *The Neighbors* and *Judge Lynch* pass this test successfully. They concern themselves with serious problems confronting human beings and any audience will be keenly aware that the lives of the characters have been vitally affected by the decisions made in the course of the play.

Our drama then will have been selected with this test in mind. We are about to present an idea acceptable to the audience, to invite their interest in general, but specifically as regards the author's concept and his treatment of it.

Rather than generalize further, I want to take a well-known selection from the one-act library and subject it to practical treatment. Will you join me in the laboratory?

THE play is *The Valiant*, by Holworthy Hall and Robert Middlemass. It was first played in 1921 and since that time has had several thousand productions in schools, colleges, Little Theatres, and in vaudeville. For several years it served (if my memory does not fail) as a starring vehicle for Bert Lytell, who showed it in professional theatres all over the country.

Naturally, this intensive treatment brought on a natural reaction and lately it has been labeled "hackneyed" and over-worked. However true this may be, the problem which it poses can never be out of date, and the background of a world war which has taught men to live violently and imposed separation upon countless families is again in sharp focus. The soldier who has drifted away from family ties is again a recognizable and sympathetic figure.

You have read the play. You have comprehended its theme, discovered its climax, visualized the characters, imagined the setting. All this you must do before you present the play to your cast. Art is one and indivisible; you must leave nothing to chance, or to others.

What then, is the theme? I see it as a struggle between opposing forces. The prisoner, sternly resolved to conceal his identity for the sake of his family, is opposed by the warden, who represents the majesty of the law. There is also the pathetic effort of the girl to pierce his defense and evoke some recognizable word or gesture. Against these two quite related forces Dyke stands firm, and although he goes to his shameful end as the curtain falls, we cannot feel that the play is a tragedy. Tragic indeed, but not in the classic form, because the protagonist is not overcome by the opposing forces. He gains his objective— anonymity and some small measure of self-respect.

All this is, to my mind, most important, and the direction of the play should emphasize this. In spite of the inevitable finale, Dyke is the winner. He maintains his incognito, he tells a convincing story and leaves his sister convinced that her brother died honorably in battle. ("Yes. It makes me happy—after what we were both afraid of. . . . I can hardly wait to tell Mother. . . . You've done more for me—and her—than I could possibly tell you.")

And somehow we feel that Dyke went almost happily, knowing that his mother and sister still remembered him and were willing to claim him, a confessed murderer, before all the world if need be. His beloved little sister had recalled to him, by her quotations from Shakespeare, what must have been the happiest days of his life. We know he died courageously; we see him go. We can also be sure he died happier for having overcome that last minute challenge to his resolution.

I have mentioned all these features of the plot because they are, to me, so important. Unfortunately, I have seen many

We Are Sorry

The name of The Heuer Publishing Company was unintentionally omitted from the list of play publishers mentioned in our dedicatory statement published on page 1 of our January issue.—Editor.

productions where these points were either overlooked, underplayed or obviously uncomprehended.

There may be conflicting views about the climax of the play. Many people believe this comes during the scene between the brother and sister, perhaps at the place quoted above, where she is quite definitely convinced that Dyke is not her brother. The audience is at liberty to discover his identity. That is what I meant in the article mentioned above in saying that the audience likes to be one jump ahead of the players. But after her first hopeful entrance, the girl should never appear to accept Dyke as her brother Joe.

Others may prefer the climax at the point where Dyke starts for the execution room. This is an emotionally stirring moment, and pity and dread, the essentials of tragedy, are at full pitch.

But what about the quiet moment when Dyke is left alone, his sister gone, his sands running low, and he softly adds the next couplet to her quotation from Juliet's lines that tell us everything he has said and done up to now was mere mummery and that we are at liberty to recognize him as Joe Paris. Can you beat that for a climax?

Maybe so. After all, the authors have not printed any instructions, they have not erected a signpost to guide us to the emotional high point, and this is a free country. When you have decided upon the (to you) most attractive peak of suspense, bend your steps toward it and direct all your action so that the emotional response from the audience is, at that moment, realized to the full.

Remember, too, that every climax has to be followed by what dramatists call "falling action", a gentle slackening of suspense so that the curtain may fall upon something less than the height of emotion. A climax should not occur too early or the suspense is over and the coughing members of the audience will get to work. If, on the other hand, you try to maintain the tension right up to the curtain, you make an extreme demand on the audience, and either bronchitis or shuffling feet may wreck your whole scheme.

For the first reason I don't see the climax until after Josephine leaves, and for the latter I prefer to suggest an underlining of the misguided but genuine heroism which can be shown in Dyke's pathetic recalling of his boyhood and his unrealized ambitions.

WHEREVER the climax, it should be played in the most effective place on the stage. There are certain areas which are regarded as "stronger" than others. Despite the old-time professional's love for an upstage position, the positions nearer to the audience are more potent. Perhaps

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for an entrance up center may be desirable (if "an entrance", as leading ladies interpret that word, is ever desirable) but for the purpose of increasing the dramatic impact the players should be downstage.

All big scenes will be played center, right or left, in that order of preference. Remember that we read from left to right, and therefore the eye starts looking to the left, which is stage right to the player. In *The Valiant* practically all the action which revolves around Dyke should be played downstage.

The generally accepted setting for the play, which should never be anything but most simple, makes the anteroom from which Josephine comes, and to which she finally leaves, down left. The other wall contains two doors. The one upstage leads to the office and this is so placed that the Warden and the Chaplain may enter unobtrusively in the final scene and sit behind Dyke. Obviously, Dyke is downstage, having just said goodbye to his sister, who leaves down left, and starts his contemplative quoting of Shakespeare.

The door at downstage right is the one "seldom used". We know where it leads, and why it is only opened once. The jailer enters from there; Dyke joins him and the two prison officers complete the procession, all facing the dread doorway—down right.

For the three most powerful scenes we have, therefore, used the three most effective areas. Josephine whispers her tearful farewell at the door left, Dyke stands center to say Romeo's lines, and the procession leaves down right.

This plotting of the action is almost inescapable. I have outlined it because it emphasizes the importance of the downstage positions. Other plays may not so obviously call for effective playing areas, but *The Valiant* may show the way.

This play needs very little "business". Most of the rising and sitting is clearly suggested in the dialogue and only enough movement is necessary to avoid monotony. Constant changing of positions will make it look fidgety and artificial. The strength of the play lies in its quiet emotional conflict.

It may be interesting to mention one arrangement of the characters that I have used with effect, because it is apparently contrary to the stage rule that the important character should be upstage and the supporting one below. This is in the scene where Dyke, after pondering how to convince Josephine that he is not her brother begins: "Wait! Now listen carefully to what I say—" Then follows a long speech.

I can imagine that a Broadway star would seize eagerly upon that for an upstage position. It is beyond doubt Dyke's scene and not Josephine's. But following my contention that the audience must believe, until the climax or revelation, that Dyke is not Joe Paris, I consider it most important that the girl's face be prominently shown to the audience. Dyke is therefore downstage, with his back partly

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turned. The audience sees not his face as he makes up the fantastic tale, but hers, drinking it in and believing every word. What is more, she can make us believe it too.

The girl should be seated for this speech. That is one of the legitimate pieces of business. Dyke can pull down a chair from the desk at about the line: "Mothers ought not to be treated like that." The move will give him a chance to hide the emotion that would be in his face; it also leaves the audience in the dark as to whether the reference to mothers has gone home (if they are speculating upon whether he is or is not). Then he can walk upstage to a weak reflective area when he says "I was thinking of something."

At the end of the big scene, if he is still downstage of Josephine, his eyes may well light naturally upon the envelope on the desk (the audience following the glance and anticipating his next move) and he will cross to pick up the money. Then he comes down to the other side of her and is then in position for the touching little scene of farewell. I now picture him a little right of center, downstage, in position for the exit of Josephine and his own motionless utterance of the revelatory couplet. Except for going upstage to sit and continue his musing until the Jailer comes, he will never leave the center area until for his last walk.

THE tempo of this play will not give you much trouble. It is almost impossible to rush it, to let cues overlap. Allow time for the unspoken thoughts to seep through.

It should have a definite rhythm, which means an orderly arrangement of accents. Each play, like each piece of music, has its own fundamental rhythm and you don't need to be musically gifted to feel the beat and throb of good dialogue. Try listening to your players with your eyes closed. Perhaps they will develop it themselves, if not you must step in quickly and show them what you want.

Take, for instance, Josephine's speech which begins: "But best of all he'd learn some of the speeches from the plays themselves." Can you hear that slow, steady beat? It is never jumpy or erratic. There is no frenzy in this play. All the characters are in complete control of themselves, and it is the director who must see that this quiet power, this steady rhythm is always in evidence.

Next issue: "Directing the One-Act Comedy and Farce."

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Eleonora Duse

"Italy's Tragic Queen"

The Fourth in a Series of Seven Articles on Great Actors and Actresses

By PAUL MYERS

Theatre Collection, Public Library, New York City

FEW of the foreign actresses who have visited the American theatre have won as much genuine favor as Eleonora Duse. Though she never aroused the ecstatic, almost hysterical response which greeted Sarah Bernhardt on her several American tours, Duse was accorded a deeper, more respectful admiration from her audiences. She did not seek the sensational publicity so avidly sought by Bernhardt; nor resort to stunt and artifice to keep her name in the public press. Duse, rather like Garbo of a more modern day, won most attention either through her acting or because of her strenuous efforts to avoid publicity. Offstage she was retiring and shy. She saved her acting and her ability to simulate emotions for her life on the stage.

Duse was born on October 3rd, 1859, in a railway carriage near Vigevane, a little village on the Lombardy-Piedmont frontier, in Italy. Her father was a strolling player, and her mother, too, traveled about with the company. Her paternal grandfather was Luigi Duse, the manager of the Garibaldi Theatre at Padua. Eleonora, one can tell, was born into a genuine theatrical heritage. It is known that she was playing bits in her father's company before she was twelve, and it is safe to hazard that she was probably carried on even before she could walk. By the time she was fourteen, Duse was enacting leading roles. This does not seem at all remarkable at first thought. After all, one says, in our own day, Shirley Temple and Margaret O'Brien and Mickey Rooney have played leading roles before they reached fourteen years of age. These modern stars, however, did not essay the great classical roles; parts which have baffled and perplexed most of the great artists of the theatre for many centuries. Eleonora Duse, however, tackled these difficult roles and, if we can believe contemporary reports, did them with some excellence.

It is doubtful, of course, that any in her audience during these early years, realized that the thin, pale, wistful little girl would some day become the queen of the Italian stage. Duse's first speaking role, we know, was that of the daughter, Cosette, in a dramatization of Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables*, when she was only four years of age. The French author's great novel was a favorite all over western Europe, and reached through translation people of many countries. Its rich dramatic possibilities, in fact, have continued to attract the people of the theatre down to our own day. Very likely, the version used by Duse's father was prepared by himself, or some writer attached to the company.

By 1874, Eleonora Duse was a star in her own right. Her portrayal of Juliet had definitely assured her claim to a star's standard, and she had won the acclaim of her people. Though she played throughout Italy and in several of the capitals of Europe; it was not until 1893 that she made her first American tour. The reaction of the audiences of this country was overwhelming, and the actress was acclaimed everywhere she traveled. On this tour, as indeed through most of her life and since her death, her audiences insisted on drawing comparison between Duse and her colleague of the French theatre, Sarah Bernhardt. Sarah had first visited this country in 1880, and had created a veritable storm of enthusiasm. Her beauty, her showmanship, her musical voice, and, above all, her portrayal of rather sensational characters had won for her a host of admirers. The press of the United States was filled with fantastic tales of Sarah's life and loves, of her fondness for lions and tigers as household pets and other concoctions of a press agent's imagination. Duse, on the other hand, was more reserved. She preferred to win attention only by her work in the theatre. As to the artistry of these two ladies, there are people of great judgment who hold differing opinions even to this day. The argument is one, indeed, that crops up from time to time among theatre enthusiasts and is an excellent one since there is no possibility of its ever being satisfactorily settled.

ON this first tour, Duse's repertory included: *Camille*, by Dumas fils; *Fedora*, by Sardou; *La Femme de Claude*, also by Dumas fils; *Divorcons*, by Sardou; *Cavalleria Rusticana*, by Giovanni Verga,

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and Goldoni's *La Locandiera*. While none of these plays holds the stage today, except for occasional revivals of *Camille*, they were all tremendously popular with late nineteenth century audiences. They were all plays which leading actresses, particularly those who visited this country from the theatres of France and Italy were expected to include in their repertory. New plays were not looked for, and it was a greater treat to be able to compare one with another in the same role than to have to judge the merits and demerits of the play itself. In more recent days, the attitude has changed. An actress who revives an old play today must first convince the audience that the play is worth reviving. "Who wants to see that old thing?" is very often the first comment. Duse's audiences, however, were very happy to see these plays, and the tour was a vast success.

After touring almost the entire length and breadth of the United States, Duse returned to her native Italy to act for her compatriots. In 1896, however, she once again re-played most of the large cities of the United States. On the second tour, she concentrated on fewer plays, doing only *Camille*, *Cavalleria Rusticana* and *Magda* in Sudermann's *Die Heimat*. It was on the occasion of this tour that an anonymous writer for the New York World wrote: "You cannot afford to miss Duse," and then added, "she appeals to human nature." During May of 1896 the star was playing in Boston when a writer for the Boston Herald wrote: "Carmen may be added to Duse's limited repertory." One wonders what this same critic would say about some of the leading ladies of the contemporary theatre who spend four and sometimes five seasons doing only one role—and that one not of very great proportions.

By October 20th, 1902, when Duse opened her third tour of the United States at the Tremont Theatre in Boston, her reputation was securely established. During the intervening years since her last visit, the actress had formed a strong friendship with the great Italian poet and dramatist, Gabriele d'Annunzio. For her opening performance, Duse chose the latter's *La Gioconda*, which had been written for her. The subject matter rather shocked the staid Victorian audience of the Back Bay, but Duse's reputation overshadowed the dubious virtues of the play. Were it not, however, for the already secured established renown of the Italian star, there would probably have been much wider and loudly expressed disapproval of the play. On November 4th of the same year, Duse re-appeared in New York after an absence of almost seven years. It was in *La Gioconda* again that she made her initial appearance before the metropolitan audience at the Victoria Theatre (later re-named the Rialto).

Duse's entire repertory on this trip, indeed, was made up of plays by d'Annunzio. It comprised, in addition to the

DRAMATICS MAGAZINE



Signora Eleonora Duse

The expressive gestures with her hands as seen in the photograph, were characteristic of her acting. (Photo courtesy Theatre Collection, New York City Library.)

aforementioned *La Gioconda*, *La Citta Morte* (*The Dead City*), and *Francesca de Rimini*. It is indeed fortunate that Eleonora Duse enacted these roles, in spite of the outcry against them which was voiced by the early audiences. Upon them has rested the greatest glory of her career in the theatre, and they represent the pinnacle of her achievement. It is her work in these plays that is cited when recalling her name and her work in the theatre. It seems to have been an instance of that too rare phenomenon in the theatre when two great talents merge toward the formation of something greater than either single talent. Both of them never appeared as great again. True, both Duse and d'Annunzio had done important things in their careers before they joined their talents, but the supreme pinnacle (one of the highest in the entire history of the Italian theatre) was reached only after this jointure had been effected.

IT must not be imagined that all of Duse's acting was done in the United States during these years. Between her American tours, she played for her countrymen in the cities of Italy and also filled engagements in other European capitals.

On June 2nd, 1897, she made her first appearance in Paris as Camille—thus inviting comparison with Sarah Bernhardt and by the latter's compatriots. During the fall and winter of 1899-1900, she played in Germany and Austria. Little is known of these engagements beyond the fact that they were played. It is definitely known, however, that during December, 1901, at the first performances in Rome of d'Annunzio's *Francesca da Rimini*, the audiences were left aghast by the treatment of the theme, and were forceful in voicing their disapproval. Duse enacted the leading role during these performances.

On January 20th, 1903, Signora Duse gave what was announced as a "farewell-performance" at the Metropolitan Opera House in New York City. Rather than devote herself to one of her roles at this performance, she enacted scenes from several of the plays in her repertory. During the next twenty years (four of which were the years of World War I), Duse devoted her attention to the theatres of Europe. She played throughout Italy, France, and Germany and made occasional journeys to other places. In May, 1905, she played in London and (rather unfortunately) played in Arthur Wing

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Pinero's *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray*. I say unfortunately because this was a role which in the English theatre had become almost the personal property of Mrs. Patrick Campbell. Just before the outbreak of the war, on July 29th, 1914, Duse was stricken with a kind of paralysis from which there was exceedingly slow recovery.

Duse, however, did recover and, after the conclusion of the war, once again journeyed to America. On October 29th, 1923, Duse appeared at the Metropolitan Opera House in New York City. It is an interesting indication of the changing theatrical taste to look at the repertory for this visit. It included: two plays of Ibsen, *The Lady from the Sea* and *Ghosts*; *Cosi Sia*, by Gallarati-Scotti; *La Porta Chiusa*, (*The Closed Door*) by Marco Praga, and d'Annunzio's *The Dead City*. One can tell from this that Duse endeavored to keep abreast of the newest in dramatic trends by giving her audiences those things she felt they would be happiest to see. On this tour, too, she was managed by the firm of E. Ray Comstock and Morris Gest to whom the American theatre owes so much in so great a variety of ways.

It was while on this tour that death came to Eleonora Duse. Her last performance was one of *La Porta Chiusa* at the Syria Mosque in Pittsburgh on April 5th, 1924.

The Group Plan and Sight Line Drawings

The Fourth in a Series of Articles on Designing Stage Scenery

By A. S. GILLETTE

Technical Director, State University of Iowa Theatre, Iowa City, Iowa

WHEN one stops to think about it, it becomes apparent that even a very well done perspective sketch of a stage setting, or a photograph for that matter, is practically useless in telling the carpenter how to build it. The proposed effect can be shown easily enough by means of a sketch, but the all-important matter of specific dimensions pertaining to the proportion and balance still remains a nebulous quality. With just a sketch as a guide the best that a carpenter could do would be to guess at the size of a given wall area or at the dimensions of a doorway. If this were the standard building procedure, there would be little reason to bother with sketches at all, for there could be no assurance that the completed setting would be anything other than a very rough approximation of the original intention.

Up to this point we have been principally concerned with source material, director and actor requirements, and with those arrangements of the setting that will best satisfy these requirements and at the same time present an effective composition. Before we are ready to make the final colored design, our preliminary sketch must be transposed into terms of actual feet and inches. By doing so at this time any changes in the size of the set, or of any of its various parts that may be necessitated by the physical limitations of the stage, can be made and incorporated within the final design.

Ground Plan

THE first step in the process of transposing a free hand sketch into terms of feet and inches is the drafting of the ground plan. This is a scaled mechanical drawing representing the top view of the setting as it appears in its proper position and correct relationship to the equipment and dimensions of the stage where the play will be presented. Imagine if you will that you are standing on the gridiron high above the stage and looking directly down upon the setting. The ceiling has been removed so that the form and shape of the setting can be clearly seen. This is the view that is presented by the ground plan. The typical architectural plan is a horizontal section taken above the floor represented. Such a sectional drawing taken through a stage setting is frequently misleading because there is no apparent thickness to the flats representing the walls. Many designers find it more convenient to represent their setting by drawing the top view rather than the conventional horizontal section.

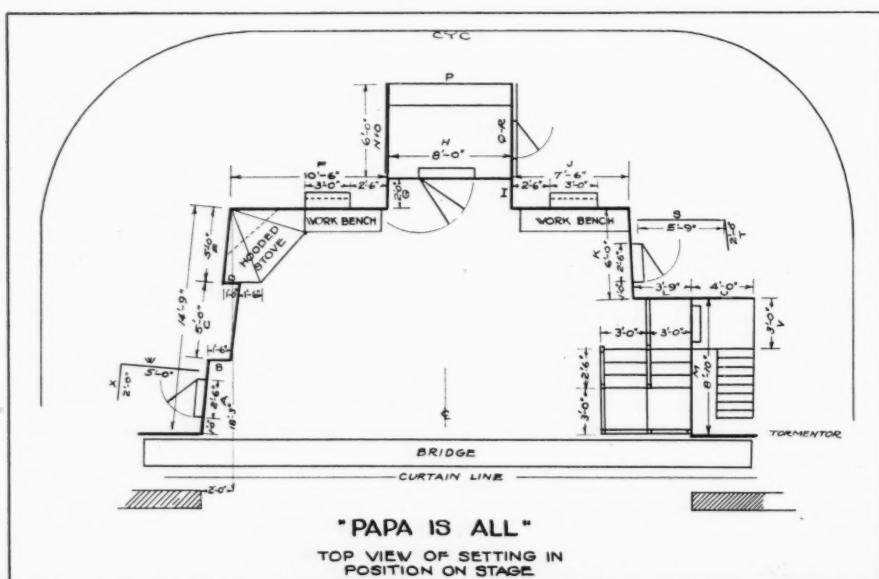
It has been stated repeatedly that no two designers work in exactly the same fashion. Some designers prefer to lay out their ground plans first and then adapt their source material to this form. I personally find it much more satisfactory to visualize the details of the design and allow my source material to dictate the form of the setting before I attempt to adjust it to the stage. This second pro-

cedure assumes that one does not at any time lose sight of the fact that he is planning a setting for a given stage with specific dimensions.

The importance of the ground plan cannot be over-emphasized. It is the key plate on which the designer's elevations, detail and sight line drawings are based. Not only is this drawing a primary factor in the designer's work, but it is consulted and used by practically every member of the production staff. The technician, whose responsibility it is to interpret the designer's plans into working drawings, analyzes the plan in terms of the number of flats required, where and how they'll be joined and by what manner they will be shifted. The lighting artist employs copies of it to plan the light plot for each scene. The property master needs it to spot the position of floor props and to determine the route of property shifts. The costumier may be concerned with the width of doors and of hoop skirts. The stage manager uses it constantly in chalking off the form and position of the setting on the stage floor during that period preceding dress rehearsals when the scenery is being built and painted.

With the plan of the scenery laid out for them in this manner, both the director and actors make constant use of it in planning and timing their stage business. Many long, dreary hours can be cut from the dress rehearsal period by adopting this procedure for the very simple reason that the actors are already accustomed to the boundaries and the exact location of exits long before the actual scenery is placed on stage. The dress rehearsals can thus be devoted to the task for which they are intended, that of synchronizing all of the elements of the production and of polishing and finishing details. We have all been connected with productions where, through ignorance or laziness, this elementary procedure was not followed and we have seen the look of consternation on the actors faces and heard them say as they inspected their scenery, "But I didn't know the door was going to be over here," or "I had no idea that the setting was going to be this large." And there will be no need to hear a director alibi a poor rehearsal by saying, "Just as soon as the actors get adjusted to the scenery things will go much better."

THE actual drafting of the ground plan is neither difficult nor complicated and the time required to do it can be noticeably reduced if you have taken the trouble to have blue prints made of the stage floor plan as it was described in the first of these articles. Very briefly, this drawing is a scaled mechanical drawing representing the stage in top view or in horizontal section and is usually drawn to the $\frac{3}{8}$ -inch or $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch scale. It must be accurate and it should give the dimensions and location of all permanent stage equipment. Mount a copy of this drawing on your drafting board and place over it a sheet of tracing paper. An accurate copy



of the stage plan can be transferred in just a few moments without the need of applying a scale rule to the drawing. The ground plan of the setting is then drawn on this tracing of the stage.

It is well to remember that drafting the ground plan has actually more influence on the final appearance of the setting than the original sketch, and that you are designing just as much when you make adjustments in this plan as you were when you were busy re-arranging the source material in the thumbnail sketches. The audience judges the effectiveness of your work by what they see on stage, not by the original sketch which they never see. Since the setting will be built from the dimensions established in the plan, it pays to take every precaution possible to insure these measurements being correct.

Prop your completed preliminary sketch just above your drafting board where it can be studied. The problem before you is to transpose the shape, the proportion and the arrangement of your design from its present sketch form into a plan. There are no rules that are applicable to all problems that will infallibly guarantee good proportions. This is why the problem of laying out the ground plan is a trial and error procedure. The designer is very likely to make any number of different arrangements and adjustments before he feels satisfied that his plan reflects the same proportion and balance as his sketch. He usually begins by blocking out the shape of the setting, doing it very lightly in pencil over the tracing of the stage plan, until he establishes the general shape and over-all dimensions. There are a few established dimensions that may be of help in this first rough draft; the width of the proscenium is known; the average depth of an interior setting on a stage of normal size ranges between 15 feet and 18 feet; the average doorway is between 2 feet 6 inches and 3 feet wide, while stair steps have been more or less standardized with risers of $7\frac{1}{2}$ inches and 10-inch treads. With these dimensions as guides the form of the setting is slowly built up around them. The designer has literally felt his way through the various parts of his setting. He has changed the angle of the walls several times, the doors have been moved from one position to another, this wall has been widened at the expense of another until he is convinced that the plan as it stands is the best duplication he can make of the composition he has suggested with his sketch. Since this rough plan of the setting has been drawn over a scaled copy of the stage floor each line so drawn can be measured by placing a scale rule against it and checking its exact length in feet and inches.

Once a satisfactory solution has been found for the form of the setting, the plan is redrawn. This time the rough, free hand lines used in blocking it out are replaced by solid, heavy construction lines that are made with the aid of drafting instruments and each line is accompanied

by its correct dimension. The completed plan will convey the following information:

1. The relationship of the set to all the permanent stage equipment; curtain line, tormentors, teaser, bridge, cyclorama, etc.
2. The size and form of the setting.
3. The size and position of the various wall sections comprising the set.
4. The size and location of such architectural features as doors, windows, fireplaces, columns, pilasters, niches, built-in furniture, platforms, ramps and stairways.
5. The position and dimensions of all masking backings: cutouts, drops, trees, walls or shrubbery.
6. The size of off-stage space available for the storage of scenery and props.
7. The position and dimensions of all off-stage platforms and stairs used by the actors on entering or leaving the set.
8. Key dimensions used in locating the position of the set on stage are given in reference to a fixed line across the stage at the proscenium opening and to a center line drawn at right angles to the first.

If the lines used in drawing the plan are inked, or made heavily enough with pencil on tracing paper, any number of blue printed copies can be made from the original ground plan.

Sight Lines

THE matter of sight lines is usually tested just as soon as the exact shape and dimensions of the setting have been established. These sight line tests are a precaution taken by the designer to make certain that all principal parts of the setting are within the range of vision of even those members of the audience who occupy the extreme side aisle seats or are in the last row of the balcony.

A vertical section and a horizontal section of the auditorium and stage are drawn on as large a scale as is convenient. It is inadvisable to use a scale smaller than $\frac{3}{16}$ -inch to 1 foot, as it becomes increasingly difficult to do accurate work on the smaller scales. Make very sure that you have plotted on the horizontal section the exact location of the extreme side seats in both the first and last rows in the auditorium. The vertical section will show the height of a person's eye level in relation to the stage floor from a seated position.

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tion in the first row in the auditorium and from the last row in either the balcony or the orchestra. Have blue prints, or better yet, black and white prints made from these drawings so that it will not be necessary to redraw them each time a setting must be tested. These prints can be used just as we did the larger scaled plan of the stage, by placing a piece of tracing paper over it and making a copy of the print.

The ground plan of the setting is redrawn on the stage and to the same scale as that used in drafting the horizontal section. By drawing a light line from the extreme sight line positions past the proscenium arch and into the setting, it may be determined at a glance how much of the setting is lost to view from a person seated in that position in the auditorium. The length of any masking backing seen through an opening of the setting can be determined in the same fashion. Sight lines are drawn from the two extreme auditorium positions through the opening of the setting and extended until they meet the backing unit. The horizontal sectional drawing provides the designer with the following knowledge concerning sight lines:

1. The area within the setting visible to all spectators.
2. The necessary angle of the side walls for good visibility.
3. The amount of off-stage area visible to the audience.
4. The length and distance from the setting of any masking unit.
5. The position of the tormentors and returns for complete masking.

A side view of the setting in its proper position on stage is drawn on the copy of the vertical section through the auditorium and stage. Sight lines are drawn from the lowest and highest seats in the auditorium past the teaser and into the setting. From this drawing the designer may learn:

1. The height of the teaser and light bridge.
2. The position of the ceiling in respect to the tormentor line.
3. The necessary height of all masking backings.
4. The height of any upstage platforms that may place an actor beyond the sight of those in the balcony or the first row orchestra.
5. The depth of the setting in relation to the teaser height. (A very low teaser and an exceptionally deep setting may be objectionable sight lines from the balcony.)
6. The height and position of all drops, borders and tabs.
7. The position of the cyc floods and the cyclorama area visible to the audience.

Unfortunately, some theatres have been built with poorly planned auditoriums and with whole blocks of seats extending too far to the sides beyond the width of the proscenium to possess satisfactory sight lines. These seats may be all right for general assemblies, for musical recitals or lectures, but they are of no value to a play-going audience. Too little of the stage can be seen from them. Any effort on the part of the designer in arranging his setting to accommodate these sight lines usually results in a setting with restricted acting space.

A Broadcast from Your Stage

By CHARLES LAMMERS

Dramatic Director, Station WLW, Cincinnati, Ohio

If a fifty thousand watt clear-channel radio station walked in, set up equipment, and broadcast a play from your school stage, that would really be a thrill, wouldn't it? That's what I've been doing for two seasons, and I'm about to start my third, in February.

Touring with a stock company isn't exactly a novelty to me. Before I entered radio broadcasting in the early thirties, I had played in almost every town in the nation which boasted a theatre—or a tent. However, I'm looking forward with eager interest to my forthcoming third season of a new kind of stock. Plans are well under way for the third tour of Ohio, Indiana, Kentucky, and West Virginia by the WLW Stock Company, of which I have the privilege of being director.

Two seasons ago, with the suggestions and cooperation of high school drama directors in WLW's vast area, James D. Shouse, president of the Crosley Broadcasting Corporation, authorized our first tour. We brought the WLW players on Friday nights to high school auditoriums throughout four states. Following presentation of the student play, we broadcast original half hour radio dramas from the school stages. And a member of the school cast was given a role in the professional production.

Though started as an experiment, to our gratification here at the station, the project has won such wide interest, that we are now lining up our itinerary for the third season.

Many of you who read this are, of course, outside the area serviced by WLW's clear channel signal. Consequently, if you wished to set up a plan such as ours, you would have to approach one of the broadcasters in your region. But in the belief that you will find the plan a vital impetus to interest in the spoken drama, I'm sketching briefly how we go about setting up our stock company tours.

The reason we do our broadcasts on Friday nights is that we find that by far the greater majority of schools stage their productions on Friday nights, and it has been easier to line up a continuous schedule. We have tried, also, to visit towns which seldom have the opportunity of seeing "round" actors. In the large metropolitan centers good road companies satisfy the hunger for drama. People in smaller towns, on the other hand, must travel long miles to see a play. Consequently, their contact with drama is through the medium of pictures, or dramatic radio broadcasts.

We felt that by bringing our professional company into these towns, we achieved several aims. First, naturally, we stimulated the interest of the youngsters who were studying drama, and participating in school plays. Secondly, we gave some young man or young woman a taste of professional radio theatre. Thirdly, we gave the parents and citizens of the town an opportunity to see the painstaking effort that is put into the broadcasting of radio drama—even the much-maligned "soap operas." (And let me bow right here to the high calibre of acting which intelligent critics all admit is found in those daily serials.)

Our first itinerary was set up, mainly, by sending out letters, and making phone calls to schools within our area, and matching our open dates with their production dates. After the first season, we received numerous requests for us to visit schools, if the schedule could be arranged.

Scripts, written by WLW staff writers, or purchased in the free lance market, are selected with the "live" audience in mind, to incorporate as much of the mechanics of broadcasting as possible. Thus the audience learns how sound effects are produced, how "ghost" voices are produced with filter mikes, and other tricks of the radio theatre. However, we don't bend over backwards, for we realize that our first obligation as entertainers is to the person listening at his radio.

Once a script is selected, I cast it, except for one role, from among the professional radio actors we have on call in Cincinnati. I usually have two readings, the latter one a complete rehearsal, with sound effects, and myself reading the un-cast role. Transportation is arranged for myself, the actors, and the sound men, for the date of the broadcast.

Meanwhile, the Special Broadcast Services division, headed by Katherine Fox, has ordered telephone lines installed between the school stage, and the master control room of WLW. On the date of the broadcast, an "advance" man visits the school early in the day, to check the installation of lines, and to see that the few local properties we need are ready, and that a room is available for the cast to use while the students are producing their own show. He also gives the student actor a tentative line-rehearsal in his part.

We arrive with our impedimenta about five o'clock, local time, in the afternoon, and secure the use of the stage for an hour or so for a dress rehearsal. We carry with us a complete portable sound effects laboratory, which folds up into a suitcase, which can be carried by one man (albeit a strong man). Because of the difficulties involved in transporting an orchestra, our musical effects are handled by means of recordings.

At the dress rehearsal, the engineer sets up his microphones, tests his telephone lines, and

so sets up his equipment that it can be moved to one side, out of the way, without having to unhook any of his circuits. The sound man plugs his turn tables in with the engineers' amplifier. Then a complete dress rehearsal, carefully timed, is held, with the student actor reading his role, and becoming acquainted with what is expected of him.

Normally, this is accomplished quickly. A deft adjustment of drapes, here and there, a little study of microphone positions—and we have almost duplicated studio conditions.

Well before curtain time of the high school play, we are, therefore, all set for the broadcast, and the members of the cast disperse to have their evening meal, with a warning to be back forty-five minutes before broadcast time.

After the student play is finished, and the last curtain call taken, without striking the set, the engineer and sound men begin moving their equipment out onto the stage. I insist that they work in full view of the audience so that all of the mechanics of broadcasting can be observed. While this equipment is being set up, I try to give the audience a running description of what is happening, and what to look for from the weird looking pieces of electrical equipment. Following this, I tell them something of the play we're going to present, introduce the members of the cast, and finally, of course, present the local thespian who is to work with us.

By this time—we're close to our broadcast time, and since the audience has been sitting still for a couple of hours, we declare a seventh inning, and let everybody stretch, get the coughing over with, and variously relieve the tensions which crowd gathers over a period of minutes. Five minutes before starting time, we request the audience to be seated, and be ready to join with us in the broadcast.

Then, on a signal from the studio, given by telephone to the engineer, relayed to me by a wave of the hand, the show is on—and folks in four states are hearing a young local actor in his first appearance in professional company.

In the last two seasons, we have played over twenty towns, before audiences of all colors and creeds, with uniformly warm receptions. It has been a great thrill for me to participate in these tours, and I know that the actors, engineers and sound men who travelled with us, feel the same way.

If our present plans can be worked out, we expect to start our high school schedule on February 21st, and bring the troupe out to a different town every Friday night through May 2nd.

Those of you in Indiana, Ohio, Kentucky, and West Virginia who would be interested in getting on the schedule should write to Miss Katherine Fox, WLW, 140 West Ninth Street, Cincinnati 2, Ohio. Remember, all dates must be Friday nights. Perhaps I should mention that all expenses in connection with the appearance of the stock company are paid by WLW. I know many of you must operate on short budgets, and the leasing of telephone lines would be out of the question. But we do all of that.

If you're not in WLW's four states, you might like to interest your regional broadcasters in such a plan. If we can help you, we would be most happy to do so.

West Virginians will be interested to know that one of our appearances this year will be at the Thespian drama festival at West Virginia University, April 18th and 19th. We also expect to participate in the drama conference to be held at Indiana University next June. At that time, we will present a half hour drama, cast from the students who attend the conference. The only professionals who will take part in the broadcast, will be the engineers and sound technicians.



WLW Stock Company. Mr. Lammers is seen at right in the picture.

PRELUDE*

A Drama in One Act
By LAWRENCE W. SMITH

Director of Dramatics, Charleston High School, Charleston, W. Va.

Characters: Samuel Kent, Bernice Kent, his wife, Amelia Kent, his daughter, Stephen Kent, his son, William, a butler.

Scene: Off the music room in the Park Avenue apartment of Samuel Kent.

Time: The present. Early evening.

The room is small and intimate with a door up left leading into the music room and the master bedroom. Up right is a door leading into the hall. Against the middle of the up-stage wall between the two openings is a cabinet radio with a pair of vases, filled with large cut flowers, sitting on it. Above the radio hangs a large modern water color and at right center and left center stage, symmetrically arranged, is a pair of love seats. There is also a telephone on the radio and a pair of floor lamps up left and up right which illuminate the room indirectly. The decor is in the modern manner; simple, smart, and pleasing. There is an air of formality and good taste, but it is not disturbing. As the curtain opens, Bernice is sitting right of the radio on one of a pair of straight chairs that are placed against the up-stage wall at each side of the instrument. The large green illuminated panel of the radio indicates that it is turned on and with the very slow opening curtain, Chopin's "Prelude in A Major," Opus 28, Number 7, can be heard over the ether waves as it is played brilliantly on a piano. She is elegant in her formal gown and is enjoying the music completely when Sam, in full dress suit, enters quickly from the left.

Sam: Always music in this house! (Pulling straight chair below radio and sitting on it.) And that sad variety.

Bernice: The world's full of sadness and we can't always escape it. What can express it more gracefully than music, and yet more poignantly—

Sam (Impatient): Please, Bernice, I just want to shut it off long enough to get a financial report that's on now.

Bernice: That's a young pianist on the "Musicians of Tomorrow" program. I didn't get his name. Wait just a minute. They may announce it at the end of this—

Sam: I can't sit here and let my competitors get the inside track while you—

Bernice (Resigned): All right. Don't forget, we'll have to leave in twenty minutes.

Sam (Trying to tune in on his program): Where are we going?

Bernice: To Carnegie Hall to the concert.

Sam: I'm not.

Bernice: Now, Sam, (Rising.) as chairman of the membership drive committee, I can't miss this particular concert.

Sam: You don't have to miss it. Go right ahead.

Bernice: Alone?

Sam: No, take someone else on my ticket.

Bernice (Going to door left): At this late hour? (Walking till word "Steve".)

Sam: Well, it may be that Steve will be here in time to go with you.

Bernice (Turning in door): Stephen? Is he coming home?

Sam: Yes.

Bernice (Going toward Sam): But he said he wouldn't come between quarters this time. (Walking down right below Sam who is still on a chair at the left of the radio trying to find his program.) He must be coming to surprise me for his birthday tomorrow.

*Prelude may be performed by amateur drama groups upon payment of five dollars (\$5.00) a performance to the author at the Charleston High School, Charleston, W. Va.

Sam: It's obvious why he told you he wouldn't come.

Bernice (Turning UR to him): Sam, what's wrong?

Sam (Taking a rather large schedule card from his inside pocket): This schedule for next quarter came this morning from the registrar for my approval. He's changed his whole course (Dropping card on radio.) and I've wired him to come home. We'll have this out once and for all! (Jumping up.) Damn this radio! I never could get anything on it. I'll try the one in my room. (Sam turns off the radio and starts for the UL door.)

Bernice (Following Sam): Sam, what do you intend to do?

Sam (Facing her): He'll go back into business administration, or I'll—(He goes out left.)

(Bernice sits on the love seat at the left center and tries in vain to read the schedule card without her glasses. She then rises and pulls a cord at the left of the radio and puts the chair Sam has been sitting on back UL of radio. While waiting for the butler, she paces the floor with the card. William enters right.)

William (In the right door): You rang, madam?

Bernice: Yes, William. Bring me my glasses. Alice will find them for you.

William: Yes, madam. And here's a telegram for you.

Bernice (Taking it for a moment and then handing it back to him): Open it and read it. (He opens it.) Who's it from?

William: Your daughter, Miss Amelia.

Bernice: Yes, go on.

William (Reading the telegram aloud): Will arrive home around eight, ahead of Stephen if possible. He will need you and me. Try to get father to see with an open mind.

Bernice (Taking telegram without envelope): Thank you, William.

William (Going to door left and turning toward her): Is there anything else?

Bernice: Just my glasses.

William: Yes, madam. (William starts out.)

Bernice (Calling to him): Oh, William.

William (Reappearing in door): Yes, madam.

Bernice: Tell Alice to get both of the children's rooms ready.

William: Yes, madam. (He goes out left with telegram's envelope.)

Bernice (She sits on the love seat at the right and is flicking the schedule card on the opened telegram as Sam enters from the left.): Is your program over?

Sam: Yes. I was too late. (Looking about for something.) I came for that schedule card to see if there's anything on there that he can keep.

Bernice (She gives him the schedule and he starts out left.): Here's something else. (Sam puts the card back in his pocket, takes the telegram, and reads it silently with back to audience.)

Sam (Turning to his wife.): What does Millie mean, "Try to get me to see with an open mind?" She has always been the sensible one about Steve." (He tosses the telegram on the radio.)

Bernice: She still is. She hasn't changed. She's just never told you what she really thinks about it.

Sam: Why not? She's never been afraid to talk to me about anything. We're as close as any father and daughter that ever lived. (Going toward her.) If anything has come between us! Has there?

Bernice: Of course not. But she's known that to talk about Stephen's ambition would

only make trouble for her and more for him.

Sam: So, it's going to be three against me, (Sitting left center.) three against one.

Bernice: Now don't take that stand. Force without reason won't settle this. (Rising.) The children will both be here any minute and you'll only lose their confidence and respect.

Sam: I've never had Steve's.

Bernice: (Taking a step toward him.) You can't instill confidence with antagonism.

Sam: But Millie respects my judgment. (He rises and walks down left.) In the end, she will come around to my way of thinking.

Bernice (Going DR right.): Are you sure?

(Amelia enters from the right wearing hat and gloves, carrying her purse, and is the perfectly groomed young traveler. She is of a genuine sweet nature and fond of both her parents.)

Amelia: Father. (Throwing purse and gloves on radio and embracing her father and kissing him.)

Amelia: Mother. (Greeting her in the same manner.)

(To both of them backing UG.) Did you hear Steve on the air a few minutes ago?

Bernice: (Pleasantly surprised.) No.

Sam: (Unpleasantly surprised.) No.

Amelia (Taking off her hat and putting it on radio.): I tried to get to the studio in time for the program, but my train was late. (Coming DC.) Fortunately, my taxi had a good radio. He played the Chopin "Prelude in A Major" beautifully.

Bernice (Backing up stage to right of radio.): Why, I heard that and wondered who was playing—when your father turned it off. (Sitting right of radio.) So, it was Stephen.

Amelia (Backing upstage to the left of her mother and talking to both of them.): Yes. What a shame you didn't know. You could have gone.

Sam (Walking up stage to Amelia's left.): Where was he?

Amelia: Just around the corner at the Columbia Studios. He ought to be here by now. (Going toward door at left below Sam.) He hasn't come yet has he?

Sam (Going to right of Amelia.): No, he hasn't.

Amelia (Crossing right below Sam.): Good.

Sam (Going toward Amelia.): I didn't bring Steve to New York to broadcast.

Amelia (Sitting on the right love seat.): Now, father, we know you didn't, but he would have come anyway for an honor like that.

Sam (Taking a few steps toward her.): How did you know about all this, Millie?

Amelia: Steve came over to school to see me last weekend and told me.

Sam: Then why didn't you get here in time to see him broadcast.

Amelia: I didn't come for that reason. Steve's not well. And when you sent for him this morning he called me.

Bernice (Rising and going behind the love seat at the right.): What do you mean, not well?

Amelia: He's overworked till he's on the verge of a breakdown.

Sam: He's only carrying seventeen hours.

Amelia: Yes, but trying to carry on with something he's not fitted for.

Sam: You can't say that with the record he's made.

Amelia: That's just it! He's kept up his grades for your sake, regardless of the courses and—with his music too—

Sam (Flashing schedule card.): He doesn't do anything for my sake.

Bernice (Going down left below Amelia.): I knew he was doing too much. He's so conscientious. (Turning toward Sam.) The time has come when he's going to give up trying to do two things.

Sam (Going to DR.): He certainly is.

Amelia (Rising and taking upstage center position.): Now listen, both of you. (Sam and Bernice face Amelia UC.) As long as I can remember you've each had a different career in mind for Steve, and you've each ex-

erted every influence to bring about the fulfillment of your own desire. That conflict has caused such a struggle within Steve that now he's a case for a psychiatrist.

Sam: Don't mention a psychiatrist.

Amelia: I have to. (Coming down stage.) Steve's new schedule was the psychiatrist's advice.

Sam (Behind right love seat going up right.): I know, I got a letter from him.

Bernice (Going up left behind left love seat.): Why didn't you tell me about it?

Sam (Going to the right of Bernice.): I saw no reason for worrying you with it when we're going to ignore it.

Amelia (Going to her father's right.): You can't make him do that.

Sam: Can't I? He's still under my jurisdiction.

Bernice: But he won't be after today. He'll be twenty-one tomorrow and then he can do as he chooses.

Sam (Going a few steps down stage.): He won't have to wait till then. As soon as he gets here, I'll let him make a choice.

Bernice (Going to Sam's left.): What kind of a choice?

Amelia (Going to his right.): You've got to avoid any scene that will tend to upset him, I tell you. He's sick. He doesn't sleep at night and this change of course is the last resort.

Bernice: She's right, Sam. I've seen it coming on. He might do something—

Amelia (Hearing someone off right.): Sh-h. (Sam backs DR and Bernice, DL.) Here he comes. (Backing up center, speaking for Stephen's benefit.) If my train hadn't been late, I would have made the studio.

(Stephen, a handsome sensitive youth enters wearing immaculate informal clothes.)

Stephen (Going toward his mother who meets him center stage.): Hello, mother. (They embrace.)

Bernice: Stephen, dear. (Amelia goes up right)

Stephen: Hello, father.

Sam (Shaking his hand.): Hello, son.

Stephen (To up center right of Amelia.): Hello, sis.

Amelia (Taking him by the shoulders.): Steve, you were wonderful. (Going below him to his right.) I've just been telling them about their talented offspring. They missed it.

Stephen: Yes?

Bernice (Going up stage to Stephen's left.): You know I'm proud of you. (Leading him toward left door.) Why don't you get cleaned up, and rest a bit.

Stephen (Holding back.): Not now. It seems that an emergency has arisen, and here I am. (He sits up stage left of the radio.)

Bernice (Sitting on the left love seat.): This need not be any emergency at all.

Stephen: Well, whatever it's to be, let's have it. The sooner the better.

Amelia (Sitting on the right love seat.): Yes, let's get an understanding and then have a real weekend to celebrate Steve's birthday.

Sam (Going up stage to right of radio.): You'll be a man tomorrow, Steve.

Stephen: You didn't bring me home to celebrate.

Sam: No. (Sitting right of the radio and after an awkward silence, he takes the schedule card out of his pocket.) Steve, I think you've made a mistake giving up your business administration.

Stephen: I knew you'd think that.

Sam: And you know why I think that.

Stephen: Yes. You think only a Kent can run your company after you're through. And I'll be the only Kent.

Sam: Right.

Stephen: You forgot that Millie will probably have a husband.

Amelia: Right. Leave off the probably.

Bernice: Be careful Amelia. Don't boast for you might not—

Amelia (Rising, takes a ring from a chain around her neck, the ring having been concealed in her bosom.): I didn't come home

to make an announcement, honestly, but there it is. (She shows her mother the ring.)

Bernice: John?

Amelia: Yes, mother. (She now shows Stephen her ring.)

Stephen: You never told me you were serious.

Amelia (Stepping away from him to his left.): I was afraid I might hurt you.

Stephen (Still looking at the ring.): It's very beautiful.

Bernice: You couldn't find a better boy, (Amelia starts to Sam.) but when I think of all your preparation for something else, your graduate work—(Sam is now seeing the ring, having put the card in his pocket.) Did you know, Sam?

Sam: No. But it's all right. (Giving Amelia the ring.) At least a carat. (Amelia puts it on her engagement finger and sits again, right of the center stage as her father continues.)

Millie has her own life to live, and John—

Stephen: Is just the one to do for the firm what I could never do.

Sam: And you're perfectly willing to let an outsider reap all the benefits of my life's work.

Bernice (Accepting Amelia's engagement, outwardly at least, and using the situation to further her argument.): But John won't be an outsider. Both he and Millie will be in the family.

Amelia: Mother's right. (Rising and going to her father.) You know I'll never forget how you started from the bottom.

Sam (Rising.): I have nothing against John or the marriage, but you'll be his wife, your husband's, and my business will be your husband's. (Amelia has sat right of the center again during these words.)

Bernice: Don't judge Amelia by me, Sam. I've given up when Amelia may not.

Sam (Going above the left love seat.): How can you say that? You've had everything.

Bernice: Everything, but a career.

Sam (Going down stage behind love seat at left.): You forgot the home you've made.

Bernice: It's always been second choice.

Sam (Going up stage behind his wife.): Second, to music, I suppose.

Bernice: Yes.

Sam: How do you know (Going back down stage behind her.) you would've gone to the top in music?

Bernice (Rising.): I'll never know—(Going to Stephen's right.) just as Stephen will never know if he doesn't get his chance now.

Sam (Going to Stephen's left above the left love seat.): He's going to get his chance. What a chance. And he's already proved that he'll succeed. You forget that he's majored in business administration, and that after three years of it, he has a scholarship quotient of three point seven.

Stephen: Father, can't you understand? (Rising.) I'm through, through with your business—(Going down stage.) I'm sorry, really sorry, to be such a disappointment to you, (Shaking with emotion.) but I can't go through with it. (Amelia has risen fearfully and brought Stephen to the right love seat where they both sit, Stephen on the upstage end.)

Sam (Now above Stephen.): But you're not yourself. It's true, you're sick. The psychiatrist is right—in that. You have an inferiority complex when it comes to business. And we're going to destroy that complex. Then you'll see—(Stephen now sits with his head in his hands and his elbows on his knees.)

Bernice (Still standing up left.): But all of the aptitude tests have shown that music is his only forte.

Amelia: Why can't you treat Steve as you do me? You've let me study voice when I've had no great talent. And now you don't even oppose my marriage.

Sam (Walking about.): It's not the same with a boy. It's natural for a father to expect a son to go into certain professions.

Amelia: If only I could trade places with him, I'd still be willing to put aside my own future because I know he will be a great—

Stephen (Rising and going to door at right.):

Don't worry anymore about me, Millie. (In door, facing father.) I'll get along in spite of my father.

Bernice: What are you going to do, Stephen?

Stephen: I'm going back to school, tonight.

Sam: To do what?

Stephen (Coming back into the room.): To spend all my time at the one thing that means everything to me. Life itself.

Sam: Music? The piano?

Stephen: Yes. (Bernice sits left of radio as Stephen sits at the right of it.)

Sam (Going up left below Bernice and pacing back and forth directing his remarks to her.): You're to blame for all this. When he ought to have been out playing football like other boys, you kept him in the house at the piano. (He ends these words at her left.)

Bernice: You forgot that he had his first lesson when he was eight because he wanted to play the piano.

Sam (Again pacing and ending at her right.): Of course he wanted to. Since you couldn't achieve your ambition, you made it his ambition. (To her.) You made his whole environment conducive to that one thing from the time he could hear—(Striking his fist on radio on words, "music" and "breaks") hear that music that's going to break up his home.

Bernice (Rising.): Artists are born, not made. (Going left a few steps.) You can't blame it on me!

Sam: I can, and I will! Your psychologists are right. The first seven years of a child's life determine everything. (To Bernice who sits again on the same chair.) And while I was slaving to give you position and a place in the world, (Walking DL behind left love seat.) you got in your licks, little by little, day by day, until it was too late for anyone else.

Stephen (Rising.): There's more to psychology than that. (Quietly.) I was born this way. And I can't help it. If I could, I would.

Bernice (Rising and going to Stephen.): Stephen, don't ever be ashamed of being born with talent.

Sam (Looking straight ahead over audience.): Well, I've been ashamed. (Bernice goes to left of radio and sits looking at Sam.) Many a time as the other fellows talked of their sons being on the football team or the best oarsmen on the crew, I've left them for fear they would ask me about mine. (Stephen leaves by left door unnoticed.)

Amelia: Some are born with one talent, of one kind or another, some with two talents, others with—

Sam (Turning to Amelia and going UR from below left love seat.) And Steve has more than one talent. (To Bernice.) He has ability for more than music, and with what I've accomplished—

Bernice (Rising.): Where is Stephen? Where did he go? (She goes out left.) Stephen—

Amelia (Rising simultaneously with her mother.): We must find him at once. (She goes out right.) Steve!

Sam (Taking card again from his pocket after following the women up center, he sits right of radio.)

Stephen (Entering from left wearing a top coat and carrying a piece of luggage.): What do you want?

Sam (Rising.): They wondered where you went and have gone to look for you.

Stephen: I went for my coat and bag.

Sam: So you're going back to do as you please.

Stephen: Yes.

Sam: Then you'll do it entirely on your own. You have your choice of doing as I wish with all the money you want or doing as you wish with none of my money, ever, as long as you live.

Stephen: You can't buy me off. (Setting down luggage.) That's one thing your money can't buy. (Going down stage.) I don't want any of your money, ever.

Sam: And your mother won't be able to help you, because I can control that.

Stephen (Going up stage to Sam's left.):

You seem to forget that I can earn my own money.

Sam (Throwing the schedule card on the radio and signing it.): Very well, if that's your choice. (Steve puts the signed card in his pocket and goes to his luggage which he picks up.) (Amelia enters from the left, Bernice from the right.)

Bernice (Distressed.): We can't find him. (Seeing Stephen.) Oh, Stephen, we were afraid you'd—gone.

Amelia (Going to Stephen's left.): Now let me have your coat. You're not going like this.

Stephen (Keeping his coat on and holding his luggage.): I made my decision and I can't stay here.

Bernice (Now at Stephen's right.): Stephen, what are you saying?

Stephen: I just told father I'd make my own way from now on.

Bernice (Going behind the love seat at the right.): So, he's withdrawing his financial support if you don't do his way.

Amelia (Going to her father's left.): That's the most unreasonable; (Appealing to his sense of justice.) you wouldn't do that—even in business.

Sam (Going down right center stage.): I'm afraid I would. (Going back up stage with impatience.) How do you think I've got where I am? By letting everyone else come first? (Amelia sits on the love seat at the left.)

Bernice (Coming above right love seat.): Sam, if you make the mistake of refusing to help your own son, then I will.

Sam (Starting off left.): Let him help himself. He'll get a new sense of values. (In door at left, sarcastically.) He may even develop a little business sense.

Stephen: I will go to school, (Showing schedule card.) follow this schedule, and work at night.

Bernice (Going toward Stephen.): You can't do both and become a master.

Stephen (Going below her toward door at right.): Yes, I can! And I will! (Now standing in the door.) You'll see!

Bernice (Still up center stage.): Yes, I'll see. We'll all see! We'll see you become second rate, see you start teaching to live, see you lose your inspiration to create, see you overcome by drudgery until your life is empty, except for boredom and misery.

Sam (Stepping back into room.): As a son of mine, you've never known what it means to earn money.

Bernice: To become an artist takes all the energy you've got. Talent is only the beginning. Freedom, from everything else, to develop this talent is the all important. You can't earn your own living and succeed in any of the arts. I know what it means to try to do both. I tried it, and I failed. That's why I'm going to help. It won't happen again, not to you.

Sam (Going to the left of Bernice.): You realize, Bernice, what you're saying and what your plans will lead to.

Bernice: Yes, I fully realize. I realize how you will try to whip me in line, just as you did Stephen, with the fear of poverty.

Amelia (Rising and going between her parents.): Mother, that's enough. Father won't—

Bernice (Going down right center.): But it won't be the same with me. I won't be without money. No court's going to fail to give me a settlement. (Amelia goes behind the left love seat.)

Sam (Going down right center.): And you're going to ignore my feelings toward such a procedure, the disgrace of it all, and my feelings for you.

Bernice: I have the same consideration for you that you have for—

Stephen (Up left stage.): For me— (Going behind his mother.): You would do that for me, mother?

Bernice: Yes. Nothing can stop me now!

Stephen (Still behind her.): I'm not worth it. I won't let you!

Bernice (Stephen backs up left as she continues.): Sam, we've been faithful to each



Scene from a production of *Julius Caesar* as given at the Aldrich High School, Lakewood, R. I., under the direction of Daniel Turner. See article in December, 1946, issue of DRAMATICS MAGAZINE

other for a long time and it's not my wish to do this, but it's my duty and you force me to it.

Sam: You're trying to bluff me!

Bernice: Very well. (Going to telephone.) I'll call Mr. Baird to come here at once, and if he can, I'm ready, to begin. (Bernice starts dialing.)

Stephen (Rushing to the telephone and her right, he puts the receiver down to interrupt the connection.): Mother, I've changed my mind! (Stephen tears the card into bits and throws them on the floor.) I'm going back into business! And nothing you can say or do will stop me! (He starts to the door at the right. William enters from right.)

Bernice: What is it, William?

William: The chauffeur's waiting with the car. (There's a silence as the parents have forgotten the concert.) I believe you were going to a concert, madam.

Amelia (Going to her mother's left.): Go, mother, go on. Please.

Stephen: Who was going with you?

Sam: You were. Go on. You will escort your mother in the future.

Stephen: I don't want to! I can't! (Shaking all over, Stephen sinks on the right love seat.) I just want to be left alone!

Amelia (Going behind Stephen she puts her arms about his shoulders as he reaches up and clasps one of her hands.): Father, go on and let me stay here with Steve. Please. (After a brief silence, Bernice goes above right love seat and stops. Sam escorts Bernice out right without any exchange of words. Another silence follows.) William, take Steve's coat and bag. (Stephen rises in a daze as William helps remove his coat which he takes out left with the bag.)

Stephen (He sits and speaks after another silence.): Millie, are you sure you're going to be happy, with John?

Amelia (Sitting beside him.): Yes. I've never been more certain of anything in my life.

Stephen: I'm glad.

Amelia: I knew you would be. (With deep feeling.) I wanted to tell you. We've always been so close. But I was afraid it might hurt you.

Stephen: It doesn't—much. I just feel a little more alone—that's all.

Amelia: You still have me, and John.

Stephen (Rising and going UL.): You each belong to someone else. You, to John. Mother, to father, till I came between them. (Turn-

ing and coming toward Amelia.) What am I going to do? I can't break up their lives after all these years. They've always seemed happy.

Amelia: Mother doesn't really intend to go through with it.

Stephen: But she does. Something's come over her. I could feel it.

Amelia: Father won't let her.

Stephen: He won't be able to stop her, now.

Amelia (Rising and going to him.): This is no way to spend an evening. We'll go out somewhere and leave a message with William in case—

Stephen (Sitting on the love seat left of the center.): No. Let's stay here.

Amelia: All right. (Sitting on the love seat right of the center.): What shall we do? We're going to forget all that's just happened.

Stephen: I wish I could, but I can't. I'm always in their way.

Amelia (Going and sitting below him.): You must not worry any more, or you'll break. It will work out—

Stephen: How?

Amelia: With a surprise ending.

Stephen (Rising and going toward the left door.): If I could just be alone to think things out. (He goes out left.)

Amelia: What are you going to do?

Stephen: I don't know yet.

Amelia (Quick cue.): Play something. I bet that old piano in there misses you. (Stephen begins to play softly "The Prelude" from the "Cycle Of Life," by Landon Ronald. Amelia rises and turns out the lamps. She returns to the left love seat, sinks into it comfortably and sings the words to the music to the end.) That was like old times. (There is a silence.) Play some more. (There is another silence and she rises.) What are you doing?

Stephen (Off left.): Just looking for something.

Amelia (Still standing and finally stepping toward the left door with fear.): Steve! What are you looking for?

Stephen (Off left.): Some music, I can't find what I want. See if you can get something on the radio. (Amelia has turned it on and the green illuminated dial is easily seen in the darkened room.) Try WQXR. (She tunes in a station and soon the same Chopin prelude, heard at the beginning of the play, comes over the air as it is played on a piano.)

(Continued on page 22.)

Theatre on Broadway

By PAUL MYERS

264 Lexington Ave., New York City

Readers of this magazine may order tickets for Broadway plays through Mr. Myers. Request should be accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

SO very much of interest has taken place in the New York theatre during the past several weeks that the problem of selection becomes a particularly vexing one. All of the productions—even those which have failed to meet with success—seem to contain items of interest and almost demand reviewing. The limit of space, however, sets certain restrictions and one is forced, though against one's inclination, to scan over certain things so that others can be accorded the space which they merit.

American Repertory Company

CERTAINLY, first place must be given to the American Repertory Theatre, which has already presented four complete changes of bill and has established itself in the forefront of theatrical activity in this country. The lack of a permanent repertory company in the United States has often been deplored and many attempts have been made toward such an organization. Noteworthy among these attempts was the Civic Repertory Theatre, organized in 1926 by Eva LeGallienne and carried on under her direction during the next seven years in the face of the most overwhelming odds. It was during that period, one might recall, that the United States experienced its most critical economic crisis and such an event could not but seriously affect any such artistic project. Nevertheless, Miss LeGallienne continued during that period to offer the greatest plays in the theatre's treasury at the lowest possible cost to the theatre-goer. Many of our present outstanding actors and directors worked as members of the Civic Repertory Company and untold numbers acquired their first taste of and for the theatre in the Civic's home on West Fourteenth Street.

Miss LeGallienne brings to her position as one of the directors of the American Repertory Theatre all of the experience gained by her at the old Civic Repertory. Her's is a knowledge unique in the American theatre today. Allied with her are Margaret Webster, whose great work in the theatre needs no detailing here and Cheryl Crawford, one of the most astute of contemporary theatrical producers. Surely in these three ladies are all of the attributes necessary to bring success to this venture.

The acting company, too, is an extraordinarily fine one which is already beginning to achieve a unity and ensemble quality which is the great beauty of such an organization. When one stops to consider that all of the productions which open on Broadway are acted by a company which has rehearsed together for merely four

or six weeks, it seems remarkable that any unity of expression is achieved at all. With the American Repertory Theatre we are promised the privilege and pleasure of watching a group of actors work together over a long period of time—playing one role in this production and another in the next—but always working together and under a unified directorship. Among the members of this acting company are Walter Hampden, June Duprez, Ernest Truex, Victor Jory, Philip Borneuf, Richard Waring and the Misses Le Gallienne and Webster.

The American Rep (as many have already taken to calling it) began its public career on November 6th with a production of William Shakespeare's *King Henry VIII*—a play which had not been seen here in more than a quarter of a century. While it may not be among the greatest of the chronicle plays of Shakespeare, it is certainly a play very worthy of production and in this instance it has been accorded full honors. The play has been staged by Margaret Webster, whose excellence with Shakespearean drama has already been proven with her productions of *King Richard II*, *King Henry IV* (the full-length), *Hamlet*, *Othello*, and *Twelfth Night*. David Ffolkes, Miss Webster's collaborator on several of the previous productions, has once again provided magnificent settings and costumes. The colorings of the coronation of Ann Bullen and of the trial of Queen Katherine are truly breath-taking.

Two nights later, on November 8th, the late James M. Barrie's *What Every Woman Knows* was introduced. Surely, here was as great a variety as one could hope to find. From the high poetry and pageantry of Shakespeare to the almost folk quality of Barrie, from the stateliness and pomp of the Tudor chronicle to the homeliness and charm of the Wylie household—and the new production staged with as great an amount of theatrical power and art as the former. Many of us remember the charming film of the Barrie play in which Helen Hayes and John Beal appeared as Maggie Wylie and John Shand. In the current revival, those roles are filled by June Duprez and Richard Waring, Ernest Truex appears as the doughty father, Philip Borneuf and Arthur Keegan as the two Wylie boys, Eva LeGallienne as the Comtesse de la Briere and Walter Hampden as Charles

Venables. Once again, Miss Webster attended to the direction.

On Tuesday, November 12th (less than a week after the company's inaugural performance), Henrik Ibsen's *John Gabriel Borkman* was produced under the guidance of Miss LeGallienne. Her flair for Ibsen is well-known, and the plays of the nineteenth century Norwegian dramatist were among the most often presented during the days of the Civic Repertory Theatre. While the gloomy, sombre, inverted drama of *John Gabriel Borkman* will be among the least popular of the American Repertory offerings; one is glad that it has been produced.

Joan of Lorraine

MY own favorite of the season's new plays is Maxwell Anderson's *Joan of Lorraine*, in which Ingrid Bergman is enjoying the greatest success of her career. Her role in this play must be a particularly gratifying one for an actress of her caliber to play, and she seems to glow with an inner fire and warmth which is rarely met in the theatre.

The action of *Joan of Lorraine* shifts from a rehearsal by a company of modern actors of a play about Joan of Arc to that play itself. Played on almost a bare stage with only occasional costuming, the play is more a discussion of life (mundane, spiritual and artistic) than it is of Joan. Unlike Shaw's great play, *Saint Joan*, Mr. Anderson's play dwells more upon a consideration of the life of an artist coping with the problems of today than upon the struggle of Joan of Arc with the established church and court of her day. At one point in the rehearsal of the play within the play, Mary Grey (the actress playing Joan) disagrees with Jimmy Masters, the director of the play within the play, over the conception of the playwright. The matter of Joan's compromising with the authorities of her day is involved, and the situation forms a very neat parallel with the position of the actors in renting a theatre from people who represent somewhat the same tendencies in present day theatrical set-up as the clergy which confronted Joan represented the church of that day. During the course of their conversation a great amount of spiritual and aesthetic philosophy is expounded. One of the play's greatest moments is reached when the director, in answer to a question as to just what his belief in life is, answers: "I believe in democracy—and the theatre is the temple of that belief." One cannot do justice to Mr. Anderson's play in so brief a summary since it is chock-full of thought-provoking material. It is one of those rare plays which one feels impelled to see over and over again so that it can be savored to the full measure it deserves.

The Iceman Cometh

ALTHOUGH Eugene O'Neill's *The Iceman Cometh* opened a considerable time ago, I have not been able to review it until now. A new play by this outstanding American playwright is, naturally, an event of the greatest importance. Absent from the stage for more than a decade—as far as new plays are concerned—*The Iceman Cometh* was greeted with great enthusiasm. It is, without question, a fine play; and, while it might not rank among the best of O'Neill, it must certainly be accorded a high spot among contemporary dramas.

The Iceman Cometh is set in a section of Harry Hope's bar during approximately twenty-

In the Offing

Finian's Rainbow. A new musical with a score by Burton Lane and a book by E. Y. Harburg and Fred Saidy, and with Ella Logan, Albert Sharpe and David Wayne in the cast.

Street Scene. A musical based upon the famous play of Elmer Rice with a score by Kurt Weill.

The Story of Mary Suratt. A new play by John Patrick about the plot against Abraham Lincoln.

A visit to the New York theatre by John Gielgud and his company in a repertory of plays including Shakespeare's *King Lear*.

four hours of the summer of 1912. Hope's is described by one of the derelicts who inhabits it as "the last stop" and, indeed, it would seem to be just that. From the proprietor, himself, on down to the last man in the saloon—all seem to have sunk as low as a human can and still claim to be alive. Soon after the play's opening, we learn that everyone is looking forward only to the arrival of Hickey, a traveling salesman who shows up at about this time every year and stages a great blowout for all the cronies. When Hickey arrives, however, he is not the flip, happy-go-lucky prankster of old. He is preaching some strange kind of religion and telling one and all that they must free themselves from their delusions. That only by facing whatever each most fears will he or she be able to find the great spiritual happiness that is Hickey's, and that each must do that thing which has long been deferred. Harry Hope, for instance, had for years been telling himself that one fine day he would walk around the ward again and look up all his old political contacts. For each one of the bar's habitués there has been something standing between the individual and life, and, under Hickey's compulsion, each one determines to see the problem through. Some do actually get underway but when they learn that Hickey's great happiness had been gained through the murder of his wife, they soon slip back into their old ways. There is much in the play that cannot be gleaned in one seeing and hearing of it. It has too full a measure of philosophy and of life in it to be imbibed at once. Its main theme (although it is hardly fair to draw away one of the strands) would seem to be something to the effect that life must be lived with illusions—that bare reality is not enough.

Temper the Wind

ONE of the most important topical dramas to have come onto the stage since the too early demise of *Home of the Brave* last season is *Temper the Wind*, which opened in New York just after Christmas. Written by Edward Mabley and Leonard Mins, and beautifully directed by Reginald Denham, the play has as its theme the very important one of reconstruction in Europe. Set in the small Bavarian manufacturing town of Reitenberg, the crux of the play's action develops around the problem facing Lt. Colonel Richard Woodruff in his efforts to help the town re-establish itself. Before the war the town had been largely supported by the factory of Hugo Benckendorff. The latter is one of those people who always seems able to ingratiate himself with those in power and who can change his beliefs and doctrines to suit any change of government or lack of the same. He is trying just as hard to prove his loyalty to democracy now as, no doubt, he strove to prove his faith in Nazism or in the doctrines of the Kaiser during World War I. Woodruff had grown up with Benckendorff's son, who had been killed by the Nazis for his role in the underground struggle against them. This alliance made it even more difficult for him to disassociate personal feelings from his decision as an officer. His role is made still more difficult by the presence in the town of an American industrialist who is all for "business again on the old terms at any price" and who cannot see why Woodruff cannot start the factory going without so much delay and red tape. He



Three of the principals in the American Repertory Theatre production of *King Henry VIII*. Walter Hampden as Cardinal Wolsey, Victor Jory as the Tudor King and Eva LeGallienne as Queen Katherine. The production was staged by Margaret Webster; designed by David Ffolkes.

has been very wisely included to show that such sentiments are not entirely non-American, and that all of the things which we waged a war against are represented in the thought of some right here at home.

Christopher Blake

MOSS HART has come forward with another of his projections of the mental processes of his characters. In *Lady in the Dark*, one will recall, he gave actual embodiment to the mental images of Liza Elliot, the successful magazine editor. In *Christopher Blake*, he has permitted us to share the imaginings of a youth who is faced in a divorce court with the problem of whether he wants to live with his mother or his father. Richard Tyler plays Christopher most sensitively, while Martha Sleeper and Shepperd Strudwick appear as his parents. Mr. Hart attended to the play's staging.

The play reminds one at times of *Watch on the Rhine* and again of *A Bell for Adano*. It has some of the problem of the former carried over into its own country. It has more maturity and greater scope than the latter—two qualities that would naturally have been developed in any sensitive person during the time intervening between the two plays' creations.

On the Road

Hamlet. Maurice Evans in the so-called G.I. version of Shakespeare's classic. *Call Me Mister*. A duplication of the musical which has been delighting New York since last spring. *The Glass Menagerie*. The play of Tennessee Williams which won last season's New York Drama Critics Award.

The first scene of the second act ends on a note that is dominant throughout. The American colonel warns Palivec, a Czech liaison captain, that his toast is to be a sad one. "To the optimists who landed in Normandy," toasts Woodruff. Palivec, drinking, retorts, "As sad as that!"

Thomas Beck appears as Woodruff, Herbert Bergman is Captain Palivec, Reinhold Schunzel plays Benckendorff, Blanche Yurka is his sister, Vilma Kurer and Tonia Selwart his daughter and son-in-law and Walter Greaza is the American obstructionist. *Temper the Wind* finds the theatre speaking valiantly and forthrightly and it is to be hoped that large audiences will listen.

Other Plays

IT IS too bad that the limits of space force one to skip over some of the other delights and torments of the recent theatre. The Duke Ellington-John LaTouche *Beggar's Holiday*, which borrows from John Gay's eighteenth century classic, *The Beggar's Opera*; Bert Lahr and Jean Parker in a revival which seems to show the age of Arthur Hopkins and George Manker Watters favorite of twenty years ago, *Burlesque*; *Land's End* in which Thomas Job rather unsuccessfully attempted to transfer to the stage the atmospheric charm of Mary Ellen Chase's *Dawn in Lyons*—the story of a modern Tristan and Isolde; the autobiographical comedy of Ruth Gordon, *Years Ago*, in which Florence Eldridge and Frederic March are giving sterling performances. One must pause here a moment to stress the great charm of this play and to remark that it could not fail to please anyone who has wanted to go on the stage or even been a member of a family in which such a stage aspirant resided.

It is hard to bring a halt to this review of the activity in the Broadway theatres, and only the reminder that more plays must be seen and that I will soon have another chance to bring you word of them makes it easier.

The Radio Program of the Month

By S. I. SCHARER, Radio Department

New York University, Washington Square, N. Y.

The purpose of this department is to direct attention to the outstanding radio programs on the air during the 1946-47 school year. Comments and suggestions from readers are welcomed by the Department Editor.

"Broadway Talks Back"

(Mutual Broadcasting System—
Monday, 10:30-11:00 P. M., EST)

UNTIL recently, people interested in critical discussions of the theatre have had to turn to newspapers and magazines to secure an answer to their needs, but now radio offers a program designed to satisfy the most discriminating drama lovers.

"Broadway Talks Back" reveals once again that radio can be at once entertaining and informative. For thirty minutes, listeners hear stimulating discussions of current Broadway productions. It is true that many discussion programs on the air are not only unexciting, but in some instances even extremely uninteresting. Not so with "Broadway Talks Back." The thirty minutes of this program fly by like fire. The discussions are animated, revealing, and timely because participants on "Broadway Talks Back" are drawn from Broadway itself. Not only do they have something important to say, but their many years in the theatre have developed a sense of showmanship which is displayed to good advantage on the air.

After the announcer has introduced the guests, moderator Barrett Clark starts the program off by giving the "box score" of the critical reviews of the show. This "box score" is the consensus of all the major drama critics—of magazines as well as of newspapers. A typical "box score" might

be: five rave notices, three mixed notices, and three notices which find much to criticize. Next, one of the guests from the play being discussed presents a synopsis of the play. The reviewers are then asked to give their opinions and then Broadway is given a chance to "talk back"—to answer the critics. What ensues is a free for all—about twenty minutes of absorbing theatre talk.

The playgoers in the audience are given their opportunity to participate too. In the last five minutes or so of the show they are called upon and direct questions to the critics or the representatives of the show.

IT all started in July of 1946 when Gertrude Berg and Vera Eikel, producers of the show, were having lunch together. They had been working together as a producing team for about a year. Suddenly, in the middle of lunch, Miss Berg, who is constantly getting ideas for radio programs, blurted out: "You know I think an interesting radio program would be one which would give the producers, directors, actors, and writers of Broadway shows a chance to answer some of the criticism leveled at them by the critics."

That was enough! The Berg-Eikel combination went to work on the idea. By the time they had finished their lunch most of the details had been worked out.

The next step was to sell the idea to a network.

Their first stop was the Mutual Broadcasting System's New York outlet-WOR. There, in the words of Miss Eikel, "We could see that they were interested right off the bat. Our only difficulty was in convincing them that "Broadway Talks Back" should be a network show instead of one that was sent out to New York listeners alone. We finally made our point that people all over the country were interested in the theatre."

Another problem facing the producers of "Broadway Talks Back" was selecting a moderator. What made this so difficult was the fact that the moderator would have to be someone who was impartial. The moderator, to be successful, must not represent the critic's side nor the producer's side, but at the same time must know a great deal about the theatre.

Barrett Clark was prevailed upon to accept the post of moderator. His exceptionally rich background in the theatre and his fine radio voice make him a "natural" for the job. Mr. Clark has known practically every top theatrical figure all over the world. His accomplishments are too numerous to mention. To his credit are many books on the drama, including two collaborations with Maxim Gorki. He is also known as a lecturer on the theatre, and as the official biographer of Eugene O'Neill.

Mr. Clark is one of the most respected persons connected with the theatre. He lends the program dignity and fairness. On other programs the producers have complete rights as to what is going to be said; on "Broadway Talks Back" the producers included in Mr. Clark's contract a clause which guaranteed that he would not have to say anything which he did not wholeheartedly believe.

This brings up an important point about this novel program. It is almost entirely adlibbed. The only prepared script is that dealing with the summary of the critics' reviews. The show is completely honest. There is no card stacking. The critics agree that they will stick to their honest opinions even if it means tearing the show under discussion to ribbons.

The producers of "Broadway Talks Back" find Barrett Clark to be one of the most cooperative persons they have ever worked with in their many years of radio. On the negative side of the ledger it must be said that the moderator has not yet struck the proper balance of when to remain out of the discussion and when to step into it. However, as each successive program is aired it becomes increasingly apparent that Mr. Clark is fast approaching expertise in his moderating.

If an issue comes up on which Mr. Clark thinks it is important to take a stand, he may drop his moderator's role for a minute and make his point with telling effectiveness. He has the ability to make the participants on the show feel at ease before the "mike" and by his



This photograph shows (left to right) Vera Eikel, Gertrude Berg, Roger Bower, and Barrett Clark in conference. Mr. Clark is widely known among readers of this magazine as the Executive Director for The Dramatists Play Service, Inc.

presence assures them that their integrity will not be violated and that their opinions will be respected.

Roger Bower does the directing chores for the program. He has been in radio for over twenty years. His adept handling of "Broadway Talks Back" makes one understand without question why he is one of the busiest directors at Mutual. One of his newest shows is "Crime Club."

AN important part of the preparation for "Broadway Talks Back" is keeping up on every bit of data—published and unpublished—having to do with plays running on Broadway or opening on Broadway this season. Reviews of plays are scanned during the trial period when the plays work their way to New York so that some inkling of the play's success or failure may be obtained, and so that any controversial topics are aired before they die. A few weeks before a new play is scheduled to open in New York the people connected with it are contacted and invited to appear on "Broadway Talks Back."

It is up to Miss Eikel and Mrs. Berg to invite those connected with the play who will best discuss the points to be raised. Playwrights are in especial demand and producers rank second only to the playwrights. Often the directors are invited to participate on the program and actors too, get a fair number of chances. Even press agents have taken part. All these participants must measure up to high standards of articulation and logic before they receive invitations. Then, too, temperamental persons must be weeded out lest they detract from the program.

On one occasion a temperamental artist decided, while on the air, that he would do everything in his power to stop the listening public from hearing criticisms against his show. He pulled out every trick in the bag—talked about everything but the show, and was largely successful in preventing a fair presentation of the critics' side of the story. Steps have been taken to prevent a repetition of this kind of behavior and if a similar situation ever develops again the offender will be handed his hat and coat in the middle of the program.

The critics who are heard on this program are also picked carefully. A good writer is not necessarily able to express himself vocally. Critics who are able to match the effectiveness of Broadway's cohorts are singled out. They must also be representative of a consensus of the reviews. If half the critics, to over-simplify matters, are extremely critical of a play and the other half write mixed reviews, then one critic from each of these groups will participate on the program.

A better example would be the case of a play with which a large number of reviewers find fault because of the way the play is written and another group censures because of what they consider to be poor production. Each group would be represented on "Broadway Talks Back."

A proper balance of criticism is worked for. Critics who have written completely rave notices, more often than not, have been found to have little to add to the program. After all, when one has gone completely overboard on a play in print, it is quite difficult to elaborate on the air.

JUST which plays are to be debated by the critics and people from Broadway and in what order they are to be presented poses still another problem for Miss Berg and Miss Eikel. Generally speaking, they take the stand that a show which has received such good notices that it is certain to stay need not be put on immediately. A play which has received a mixed reception by the reviewers will get precedent over one which is well established so that those connected with it get an opportunity to present their side of the story. The producers of *On Whitman Avenue* which had a run of 111 performances expressed the view that if they had had an opportunity to answer the critical comment made in the newspapers and magazines, they would not have had as hard a fight to keep the show open.

A play is not necessarily barred from "Broadway Talks Back" because it closes very soon after opening night. If the author of the production was attempting something important, the play would probably find its way to "Broadway Talks Back" so that the public could hear the pros and cons. And, if a show has been open for quite awhile, it will probably not be considered for "Broadway Talks Back" unless its subject is controversial, or a controversy arises about the play. *State of the Union*, for example, had been running on Broadway for several months when it was chosen for the program in question. Instead of discussing why it was such a good play (almost every critic agreed on this point) the question debated was: "Does a play with a topical message have a place in the American Theatre?" Authors Howard Lindsay and Russel Crouse upheld the view that such a play has a place in the American Theatre while John Chapman, New York Daily News critic, disagreed.

The premiere program was on Eugene O'Neill's *The Iceman Cometh*. Defending the

production was Therese Helburn, co-production supervisor of the Theatre Guild, and Eddie Dowling, who directed. Critics on the broadcast were Howard Barnes, of the New York *Herald-Tribune* and John Chapman.

A week later, *Lady Windermere's Fan* was under fire with Howard Young, the producer, and Cornelia Otis Skinner, who plays the part of Mrs. Erlynne, defending the production from the barbs of Joseph Wood Krutch, of the *Nation*, and Louis Kronenberger of *PM* and *Time*.

Other plays debated on "Broadway Talks Back" and the participants on particular programs have been:

The Duchess of Malfi, with John Carradine, actor, and Jean Dalrymple, press agent, upholding the play, and Joseph T. Shiple of *The New Leader* and John Gassner of *The Forum* supporting the critics' views.

J. M. Synge's classic Irish comic-drama *Playboy of the Western World* had William Hawkins Jr. and Gassner as critics and Eithne Dunne, actress, and Norris Houghton, a member of the board of directors of Theatre, Inc., the producers.

Christopher Blake was single-handedly defended by its author-director, Moss Hart, against David Beaufort, of the *Christian Science Monitor* and John Chapman.

John Gabriel Borkman was spoken for by Margaret Webster, who directed and appears in the play, and Phillip Bourneuf, featured player in other American Repertory Theatre Productions, while Krutch and Kronenberger took up the cudgels for the reviewers.

Joan of Lorraine was protected against the criticism of Rosamond Gilder, editor of *Theatre Arts*, and Nat Benchley, drama critic of *Newsweek*, by Sam Wanamaker, who doubles as actor and co-director, Alan Anderson, who assisted in the direction, and Romney Brent, a member of the cast.

THE audience of "Broadway Talks Back" participates in the show enough to require some careful selection. Anyone who writes in and says he has seen the play to be discussed and would like to attend the broadcast receives tickets. The producers or their representatives get a good part of their audience by attending the matinee of the play to be weighed on the following Monday's broadcast.



The audience is given time to speak during a broadcast of "Broadway Talks Back" over the Mutual Broadcasting System.

THE FILM OF THE MONTH

By HAROLD TURNER, Chairman,

Department of Drama, Los Angeles City College,
Los Angeles, California

This department is designed to direct attention to the outstanding motion pictures of the 1946-47 season. Suggestions for future discussions are welcomed by the Department Editor.

The Best Years of Our Lives

SAMUEL GOLDWYN put down the magazine and picked up his telephone. "Get me New York," he told the operator. "I want to talk to MacKinlay Kantor." It was at precisely this moment that a new motion picture came into being.

Two years and two-and-a-half-million dollars later *The Best Years of Our Lives*, with an all-star cast, an imposing production and a story as timely as today's headlines, is ready for the public. But it was born in the split second it took the producer's trained mind to realize that he had found the subject for a drama that was of vital appeal to every family and to everybody in love.

The magazine on Mr. Goldwyn's desk was a copy of TIME—the August 7, 1944 issue—in which he had just read a moving and factual account of a trainload of American marines coming home on a furlough to a country that seemed unfamiliar and occasionally hostile. He saw in the news story the subject for a film at once novel, important, and tremendously human. So, with the instinctive gesture of the man who knows he is right and goes ahead, he put in a call to MacKinlay Kantor.

Today, Mr. Goldwyn himself might not be able to explain why this name sprang immediately to mind. Perhaps it was because Kantor had established himself, in such stories as *Valedictory* and *Long Remember*, as a writer with a deep sympathy for and understanding of the American scene. Perhaps it was because so many of his books, like *Gentle Annie* and *Happy Land*, had proved so successful when translated to the screen. Or perhaps it was because he had just returned from England, where, as a foreign correspondent, he had lived through a particularly intense period as virtual member of a heavy bombardment group.

At any rate, Mr. Kantor was fortunately at home. Within a week he was in Hollywood. ("A few minutes of conversation with Goldwyn," Alva Johnson once wrote, "and writers go to California as if extradited.") A week after that he was at work on an original story for the screen.

A SCREEN treatment, which is what Mr. Goldwyn requested, usually consists of fifty or sixty pages of typescript. A month later Mr. Kantor entered Mr. Goldwyn's office with the first fourth of the story: one-hundred pages—of blank verse! Whatever consternation the producer experienced he managed success-

fully to conceal, and Mr. Kantor was instructed to continue his "treatment." The completed manuscript, when typed, covered 434 pages. It was subsequently published as a novelette in the Saturday Evening Post and as a novel by Coward-McCann under the title, *Glory for Me*, and distributed as a bonus book of the Literary Guild.

Mr. Goldwyn had bought a poem, but it was above all a narrative poem. Within the taut, conversational cadences of Kantor's verse there flowed the story of three men returning from the war to a town they thought they remembered, to women they thought they loved and to lives they thought they had forgotten. There was more truth than poetry in the account of Fred's marital disillusionment, Al's battle with the bank, and Homer's valiant struggle with himself.

After securing a story, the next steps normally would have been to convert it into scenario form, select a cast and, ultimately, assign a director. Mr. Goldwyn, however, chose the director first.

William Wyler has the enviable reputation in Hollywood of being a director who has never made a poor picture. *These Three*, *Dodsworth*, *Dead End*, *Wuthering Heights*, *The Little Foxes*, and *The Letter* are only a few of his very good ones. Nominated for the Academy Award five separate times, he finally won it for *Mrs. Miniver* in 1941. By that time, Mr. Wyler was Major Wyler of the Army Air Forces and was already overseas, where he subsequently produced the famous documentaries, *Memphis Belle* and *Thunderbolt*. When he returned to Hollywood in 1945, a lieutenant-colonel with an Air Medal and Legion of Merit pinned to his uniform, Mr. Goldwyn was waiting for him.

At first, to the producer's impassioned proposals, Mr. Wyler turned an indifferent ear. Like any other veteran, he longed for a vacation, a time in which to re-acquaint himself with his wife and children, an opportunity for readjustment to the old civilian way of life. Moreover, he was anxious to get into production, himself, as one of the charter members of Liberty Films, an independent producing company he had formed with Frank Capra, George Stevens, and Samuel Briskin. He was not particularly interested in a studio assignment, even for Mr. Goldwyn with whom he had so successfully collaborated in the past.

Whether it was the producer's powers of persuasion or Mr. Kantor's powers of narration that finally changed Mr. Wyler's mind, no one will ever know. It is a matter of record, however, that he had soon become as enthusiastic over the story as was Mr. Goldwyn himself. Before long

they were having heated arguments over who should be cast in the principal roles and how certain scenes should be played. And then they remembered that they still lacked a screenplay.

Again Mr. Goldwyn picked up his telephone and put in a call to New York. Within a few minutes he was speaking to Robert E. Sherwood, author of *Abe Lincoln in Illinois*, *The Petrified Forest*, *There Shall Be No Night*, and others, who had long ago learned to write with equal facility for the curiously exacting medium of the screen. Mr. Sherwood had also learned not to resist the Goldwyn blandishments. He took the next plane west.

The tripartite conferences that followed were unique in Hollywood history. Mr. Sherwood did not lock himself up with his typewriter and his artistic conscience. On the contrary, he discussed each scene with Goldwyn and Wyler, and gradually the script began to emerge from the minds and the imaginations of the three men. When Mr. Sherwood was obliged to give up his hotel room in Hollywood he moved in with Mr. Goldwyn. When he returned to New York, the conferences continued by long-distance telephone.

By the time the screenplay was completed, and retitled, at Mr. Sherwood's suggestion, *The Best Years of Our Lives*, it was so different from the original version that a publishing company offered to bring out a novelization of the film!

As time went on, the triumvirate was gradually expanded to include Gregg Toland, Goldwyn's veteran cinematographer; Irene Sharaff, the famous Broadway costume designer; and George Jenkins, New York set designer, who joined the equally noted Perry Ferguson for the art direction. Miss Sharaff and Mr. Jenkins were imported from the east to start their sketches while the script was still in preparation.

Both Miss Sharaff and Mr. Jenkins soon found their respective tasks far different from the chores they had performed for the New York stage. Sharaff's initial instruction, as a matter of fact, was to omit color from all clothes she designed for the production. After a few days of trying to puzzle this one out, she learned that Gregg Toland could light the picture more exactly if the cast were dressed exclusively in shades of gray. No sooner had she adjusted herself to this innovation than word came through to design the star's wardrobes two years ahead of contemporary fashions, so they would not be out of date when the film was finally released.

Jenkins had almost as trying a time himself. Accustomed to designing not more than three or four different sets for each Broadway play, he suddenly found himself obliged to create no less than forty-five elaborate settings, ranging from individual rooms to complete apartment buildings. Before Jenkins arrived in Hollywood, moreover, it had been customary to build movie sets slightly larger than normal rooms to provide space for the cameras, lights and other bulky equip-

ment that is involved in modern film making. To achieve realism and intimacy, however, Ferguson and Jenkins insisted on building the sets not an inch larger than life-size. Mr. Goldwyn proved sympathetic, okayed extra expense necessitated by moving walls for almost every shot.

While the script was being readied, the cast was slowly being assembled. Dana Andrews was cast as Fred, Teresa Wright as Peggy. For the highly dramatic role of Marie, Fred's faithless wife, Goldwyn, in a surprise move, selected Virginia Mayo, who had until then been typed as a demure leading lady. The addition of Frederic March and Myrna Loy, in the roles of Al and Milly Stephenson, put the cast immediately into the all-star classification. Later Hoagy Carmichael, Gladys George and Cathy O'Donnell joined the glittering assembly.

The first man to be cast in the picture, however, was not even an actor. His name is Harold Russell, and he is a veteran who lost both hands in a training accident during the war. The character of Homer, in the original story, was that of a shell-shocked spastic sailor. But when Goldwyn and Wyler saw an army documentary shot in which Russell appeared, they decided to alter the characterization entirely. Sherwood interviewed Russell at length and wrote Russell's own story into the script of the picture.

THE screenplay was finished, the cast was hired. The sound of muffled voices behind office doors gave way at last to the noise of pounding and the shouts of studio workmen. Almost overnight the sets started going up. On Stage Six a war-weary Flying Fortress, purchased from Army surplus stock, stretched its flak-scared wings. On Stage Four a complete six-room apartment, with running water and a gas-range that really worked, was built in less time than it takes to lay the cornerstone of a real apartment house. Stage One became Butch's Place, a friendly saloon with genuine ice-cold draught beer on tap. And still the hammering went on: the Midway Drug Store, the Cornbelt Bank, Homer's House, Fred's House, a Nightclub, the Union Club, an Italian Cafe. . . . Before the pounding finally ceased, Goldwyn found himself with virtually an entire town on his hands.

Meanwhile, John Fulton, Goldwyn's special effects expert, was touring the United States in a converted Army bomber, filming hundreds of feet of aerial backgrounds to be used in process shots and making screen tests of dozens of American towns. The actual prototype of "Boone City" in the script was chosen as carefully as any member of the cast. When Fulton returned to Hollywood, these aerial "tests" were screened, and Cincinnati, Ohio, was finally chosen the city after which Boone City was to be patterned. A camera crew was dispatched there to make location shots.

Still the cameras on the Goldwyn lot were quiet. The cast was on salary and the sets were finished. But William Wyler, while the expensive hours clicked by with-



After four years overseas, discharged war vet Frederic March, as Al Stephenson in *The Best Years of Our Lives*, is home again with his wife, played by Myrna Loy, and their two children portrayed by Theresa Wright and Michael Hall.

out a foot of film exposed, carefully rehearsed his actors behind closed doors. Not a camera turned until he was satisfied with the performance, the dialogue, the most insignificant bit of "business". Then, at last, he gave the signal to begin. The props, the grips, the mixers—all of them, at Mr. Wyler's express request, drawn from the ranks of World War II veterans—reported to their stations. Gregg Toland eased himself into the little chair behind the huge camera, and stopped the lens down to a point where he could achieve a longer depth of focus than ever before attempted. The result was a new brilliance and sharpness of photography that supplemented the realism of the sets and story, and gave the film an almost documentary quality. To carry this effect still further, the male members of the cast wore no make-up and the women only what they would normally wear on the street. The warning bell sounded, the red light flashed on above the sound-stage door. *The Best Years Of Our Lives* was in production.

FOURTEEN months later it emerged as a fine and absorbing motion picture, full of contemporary ideas and thought-provoking arguments.

"This is the kind of picture I couldn't possibly have made and done with conviction if I had not been in the war myself," said Mr. Wyler recently. "If Sam (Goldwyn) had handed me this story five years ago I would have had to say, if I didn't want to make a fool of myself, 'Wait just a minute! I'll join the Army and come back in three years after I get to know these characters.'" As Mr. Wyler thinks back over some of his earlier pictures, he realizes that he didn't understand the characters well enough. "But I know these fellows," he continued. "I've come home twice myself from the war and I know just how these fellows would feel and act. One character is very much like myself in the sense he comes back to a nice family, a good job and a little money. This

fellow has lived with the same woman for twenty years, yet he feels a bit strange and out of place at first. No man can walk right into the house after two or three years and pick up his life as before.

"I explained all my own fears and problems to Bob (Robert E. Sherwood) and he worked them in just the way I wanted them. He did a wonderful job in weaving the characters together. Writing the script was like doing an original story. The three characters we have now are not at all like the ones MacKinlay Kantor had in his book. Kantor's story was good for 1944-45, but we wanted a story that would stand up in 1946-47. Our toughest problem was shaping the character of the disabled veteran. We had a spastic case first, but I realized that such a character would never ring true; that no actor, no matter how great his talent, could play a spastic with conviction.

"One day while I was looking at some Signal Corps films about disabled veterans I saw *Diary of a Sergeant*, which showed a fellow who had lost both hands trying to get accustomed to hooks, artificial hands. I knew that he was to be our sailor. Bob agreed with me and we approached Sam, fully believing that he would reject the suggestion as too gruesome. But he saw what we were driving at and said 'Go ahead.' We decided to take up this boy where *Diary of a Sergeant* left him and show him returning home fully re-adjusted and determined to live among other people and to act like them in every respect. We wanted to show people that these disabled men were thoroughly capable of doing ordinary things with artificial hands; that we, in fact, are the ones who are mal-adjusted, since we annoy and embarrass them with our patronizing attentions.

"I sought out Harold Russell for our film. He never was overseas but he was a war casualty just the same. He had lost both hands in an accidental explosion in an Army training camp in Georgia. After seeing him in *Diary of a Sergeant*, I knew that no one else could play the role. He isn't an actor, of course, and he has no acting technique, but he gives the finest performance I have ever seen on the screen. I didn't try to teach him to act. I concentrated on guiding his thinking more than his actions, because I reasoned that if he was thinking along the right lines he just couldn't do anything wrong. I call his performance a 'thought' performance because you know instinctively what he is feeling just by the expression on his face or the way he tilts his head or covers his hooks."

The Play of the Month

Edited by EARL W. BLANK

Director of Dramatics, Berea College, Berea, Kentucky

This department is designed to assist directors, teachers and students choose, cast and produce plays of recognized merit. Suggestions concerning plays which readers should like to see discussed here will be welcomed by the Department Editor.

Staging *Snafu*

By ELEANOR F. CLELAND

Pleasantville High School, Pleasantville, New York.

Snafu, a comedy in three acts, by Louis Solomon and Harold Buchman. Seven women and thirteen men. Modern costumes. One interior. Royalty, \$50.00. Dramatist Play Service, Inc., 6 East 39th Street, New York City.

Suitability

WITH BOYS returning from the Armed Services to almost every home and to every community of our country, *Snafu* becomes forceful and timely, since it is a comedy concerning the life of a family whose son, the hero, has come from an army attachment in the South Pacific. The general atmosphere is good-natured levity over the problems presented by a returning veteran who is also a "dangling adolescent." (Most of the emotional problems are within the realm of high school students.) The character portrayals are not difficult and a high standard of dramatic art can be achieved with emotional understanding. The motion picture version will, no doubt, serve as a challenge to producing groups looking for a vehicle which can be both delightful fun and can also be worked into an artistic production.

Plot

Ronald Stevens, an "almost sixteen" war hero, is shipped home from New Guinea when his parents inform the army he ran away from home and enlisted by lying about his age. From the time the commanding officer tells Ronald, "Your mama wants you," Ronald is annoyed. He poutingly returns home and finds he is more than ever in conflict with his parents' attitudes and civilian customs. To his parents, the school, the neighbors, the police force, the local girls' college, the legionnaires of the community, and even to a detective hired to watch him, he is a behavior problem. Ronald uses an army term, "Snafu," to explain the situation. He says "Situation Normal All Fouled Up." To add to his own problems, he assumes those of his army friend when his identity is mistaken.

Casting

Casting will not be a problem. With thought and careful planning, characters who are better than "adequate" can be located. Ronald Stevens should be tall enough to have passed the army examination and to have been mistaken for eighteen years old. Emotionally, he should be able to act fifteen or sixteen. He should have a very strong voice. Mr. Stevens should be of sturdier stature than his son. Mrs. Stevens should possess a fairly high pitched voice which can easily portray nervousness. Josephina, the Spanish maid, should speak Spanish fluently and rapidly. (We selected a girl who had very dark eyes and hair and was in the second year Spanish class. Our gardener, Pancho, was a short, curly-haired, good-looking boy

who could convince the audience of a mellowing age achieved gracefully and easily in a California garden.) Kate Hereford, the girl friend, should be naive and youthful, but also vivacious and able to "show off" when she dons the hula skirt which Ronald brings her from the South Pacific. Laura Jessup, the college reporter, must have the best figure possible since Danny whistles at her as she crosses the stage in one scene. Danny should be a "wolf." He must be loud, eager, curious, and slightly unrefined. The high school principal should be precise and determined, without vision or human warmth. A tall thin wiry boy would fit this part and contrast to Senator Ford who should be large, pompous, and over-fed appearing. The senator should express himself in a loud, quick, slightly nasal, voice. (Although only three legionnaires are mentioned in the script, we used five. Two were the largest boys in the school and three of medium and slender build. We attempted to get variety in their voices as well as their figures.) The detective should be a little "tough" and rather sure of himself. He should be able to distort his English and enunciation and should almost "ham" his role. The college dean should be smug, dignified, and determined in a self-sufficient way. Aunt Emily should be able to express spinster nervousness and frustration through various mannerisms and by her tone quality of monotonous speech. Martha's achievement must be sustaining an Australian accent.

Directing

The Dramatist Play Service has a bulletin suggesting cuttings for making this play appropriate for high school productions. Of course, the director may make his own cuts and need not fear that cutting will destroy the flavor of the play.

For the Pleasantville High School production, lines were added for the Spanish gardener who in the script talks only off stage. He was made into a limping, white-haired, sunburned old man whose bickerings with the maid, Josephina, contrasted to the tears he shed when Ronald returned. More lines and pantomime were added for him each time he speaks in the script. He was also given an additional entrance when Ronald returned from the army. And, when the college dean came to question Mr. Stevens,

Eleanor F. Cleland

MISS CLELAND is a graduate of the School of Speech and Dramatic Art of Syracuse University. She holds her M. A. degree from the New York State Teachers College. For the past seven years she has been assembly director and head of the Speech and Dramatic Department in the high school at Pleasantville, New York.

he was called in to testify concerning Ronald's whereabouts.

The first jiu-jitsu scene was worked as follows: When the legionnaires entered, the spokesman for the group, an old man with a white beard, shook hands with everyone on the stage thus working his way to the fireplace (Stage Right) where he stood until Ronald entered from the garden (Down Stage Right). As Ronald moved to Stage Center, the legionnaire followed him and slapped him on the upstage shoulder. Ronald immediately grabbed the legionnaire's wrist and arm and swung him over his shoulder. If the legionnaire is larger than Ronald, the scene will be more comic. We rehearsed this scene in the gym on exercise mats until the boys could accomplish it with ease and be sufficiently relaxed to avoid mishaps. For the second jiu-jitsu scene all that need be shown is the detective's entrance and Ronald's approaching him in a meaningful way. The curtain is a very important part of rounding out this section and should be rehearsed each time this scene is practiced.

In the beginning of Act II where the principal tries to fence, he picked up the sword with a gleam in his eye, took two or three steps backward and then lunged forward with great gusto just as the footsteps were heard on the stairs.

Timing is of prime importance. The sound effects of airplanes must be synchronized so that their circling and diving come at the same time as appropriate stage action. For the doorbell we used musical chimes and a sour note located by placing felt on the last key before striking it. The grandmother's cane knocking was made real by rapping on the platform built at the head of the stairs and used as a ramp for the actors to descend to the back stage floor.

Rehearsals

A rehearsal schedule was made for a six weeks' period. Since our school has many activities demanding the after school time of students, the schedule was arranged to take as few actors as possible each time. By going over a small section of the play many times until groupings, crossings, and characterizations were thoroughly learned, we did not ask students to be at rehearsals where they had long waits and were on stage a short time. This method did not appear to handicap us when we put the play together as a whole, since rehearsals then became a matter of smoothing out entrances rather than details of the acting. This also kept interest alive at each rehearsal since the play did not once become stale to anyone. Students were told that their presence was essential at the rehearsals for which they were scheduled and they knew that an unexcused absence would mean forfeiting their part. One day a week was given to the stage crew for working on the setting. Since rehearsals and stagecraft were carried on on the same stage, this was necessary. However, it proved very advantageous since students knew which day would certainly be free for outside and other school appointments.

Staging

To represent a living-room in a California house, we chose to paint our flats a cadet blue and to stencil a wall paper design of a pear-shaped leaf within a larger leaf in yellow and coral. The woodwork and fireplace were light



"Here we have an ordinary egg—and a nice Stetson hat."

STORY When Bob tried the "sawing a woman in half" magic trick on the high school principal's daughter, *it didn't work!* He didn't really hurt her, but at rise of curtain, Bob's already in plenty of trouble. He tries to pretend that he's too sick to go to school—"until things blow over." He phones the school principal and talks like his Dad: "Bob can't come to school today." Then he's forced to go on and imitate the family doctor—"The boy's got bronchial complications." Unseen by Bob, his parents are overhearing all this. Bob is forced to explain to his anxious mother, but he's so upset that he's almost glad to tell her—"There comes a time when a fellow needs a man to man talk with his mother." It seems that his beautiful girl (the principal's daughter) is falling for a "college man," and Bob, in a great effort to prove how polished and suave he can be, has taken up magic. But then his big trick went wrong, and he's practically suspected of attempted homicide. Meanwhile, the kid brother, while demonstrating his "dynamic muscle building lessons, has torn the formal coat Bob borrowed from his girl to wear during his magic show (and of course she got it from her father, the principal!) Joan comes by, still mad, to demand the coat back. To hide the damage, Bob thrusts it into the laundry bag. He doesn't know that the bag is full of curtains to be dyed bright yellow. There's a roar of laughter from the knowing audience as the maid totes off the bag, while the unaware Bob explains the delay by telling Joan how he's having the coat beautifully cleaned (*he thinks*). By the time Bob finds the real fate of that laundry bag, it's too late, and the outraged principal has discovered everything!—"The dye is cast!" By now, Bob's family is beginning to get seriously worried. Mother decides to entertain the PTA ladies in hope that they may intercede for her son. Bob is all set to prove how misunderstood he is, and that he's really a model boy, but

A CASE OF SPRINGTIME

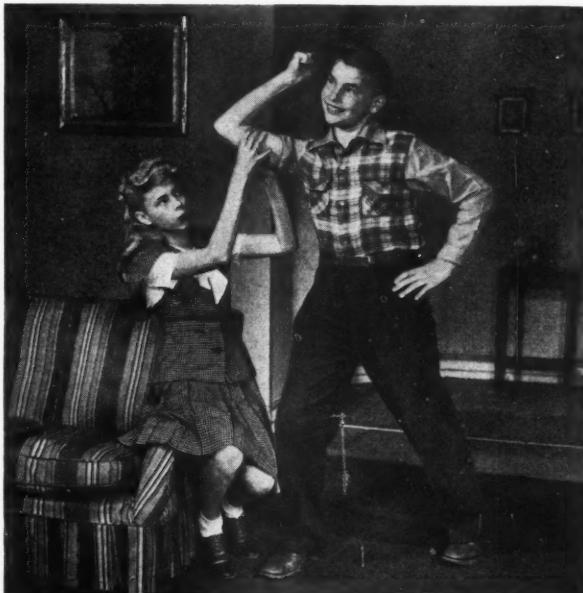
3 Act Comedy; 6m, 9w; 1 int. set

his plan is shattered. Expecting someone else entirely, Bob's innocent-looking kid brother has set up a whole series of home-made booby traps (contrived out of such reliable items as hot pads, red pepper, and electric fans). The PTA ladies, in a side-splitting scene, walk right into them, and they KNOW it's all Bob's fault. Frantically angry, they want to denounce him to the authorities, but that isn't necessary. The authorities, through a misunderstanding, are already out after Bob. "I must be living under a curse!" cries Bob, but he's wrong. Events take a sudden delightful turn, and Bob is on the top of the world—forgiven by the principal, safe from his college rival, and all set with his girl. It's a joyous and zestful comedy of youth that sends your audience out of the theatre in a happy, delighted mood.

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Imagine the handicap of the name Paul Pidge. That was only one hurdle over which Paul had to leap. He was born with an inferiority complex and a blushing desire to avoid all members of the fair sex. His job was a commonplace one in a gadget manufacturing company. No one noticed his plugging perseverance to climb the success ladder. Then came Ginger Lane and Paul's life was changed in thirty seconds. Even the girls in the office began to thrill to Paul's changed personality. He started by ripping the tie from the neck of his number one pet peeve, just to strut his new stuff. Paul lost the first round to Joe Bellows who so manipulated things that he got Ginger to say "yes" to his invitation to take her to "the big dance" date. But Paul got even. He arranged with the glamorous Rosita Torres to be his partner for that evening. Rosita's entrance was breathtaking and Paul's stock with the "gang" rose to dizzy heights. Joe pulled a fast one when he telephoned Rosita's boy friend, bringing that big tornado to the already seething volcano of laughter. All the way along "Billie" Beach, a mighty attractive lass, coached Paul in his sentimental adventure and acted as his cheer-leader. The girls all flocked to the new hero. Joe was brushed aside at every turn and Paul finished the last stretch in magnificent stride. Here's a play giving the opportunity to wear pretty clothes, the cast to shine and the audience to enjoy the time of their lives. It's headed for our best seller list and as a potential money raiser there's no surer bet than this scintillating comedy.

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Say you saw it in *Dramatics Magazine*

Costume and Make-up Plot

Act I, Scene I

Josephine: Long peasant skirt, white blouse, apron, colored scarf around neckline, straw sandal; hair in knot on neck; large gold rings in ears. Streaks of gray in hair. Darkly sunburned.

Madge: Canary yellow sports dress, wooden jewelry, organza apron, brown and white spectator shoes. Light, sunburned complexion.

Pancho: Faded blue denim trousers and shirt. Old sneakers. Dark, sunburned complexion. White hair.

Laura: White flannel skirt with pastel colored jacket; medium heels; many bracelets. Medium sunburn makeup.

Ben: Light blue pin striped suit, dusky pinkish shirt, darker rose or rust tie.

Taylor: Gray suit, white shirt, black tie, stiff white collar, black shoes, gray or black socks. Middle-aged makeup with graying hair.

Kate: Colorful blouse and skirt of coral color candy stripe chambray. Colored shoes, charm bracelets. Straight makeup of medium sun tan.

Aunt Emily: Pale blue voile dress with white lace collar. Length an inch below the calf of leg; white kid oxfords with Cuban heels. Hair plain—no curl. Knob at neckline. Middle-age makeup.

Ford: Morning coat, striped gray trousers, winged collar, gray tie, gray suede gloves, derby hat, gray spats, dark socks. *Carnation* boutonniere, cane. Middle-aged makeup; gray temples.

Legionnaires: Legion suits and hats. Makeup varying from young to old age, beards, moustaches.

Ronald: Sergeant's suit.

Act I, Scene II

Josephine: Flowered cotton robe with gay colors. *Laura:* Skirt and sweater in pastels.

Madge: Plain colored pastel negligee with slippers to match or contrast.

Ben: Green, yellow or red robe with white or cream colored pajamas.

Kate: Rose colored robe.

Aunt Emily: Gray negligee.

Ronald: Bathrobe three sizes too small. Loud pajamas. Slippers.

Danny: Messed and wrinkled private's uniform.

Act II

Josephine: Blue denim dress; red apron.

Madge: Rose colored sports dress, white shoes.

Pancho: (Same as Act I.)

Laura: Pastel blazer, light skirt, sports shoes or loafers.

Ben: Gabardine coat, white flannels, white plain socks, white shoes. Rose bud boutonniere.

Taylor: Same suit.

Kate: Attractive summer dress, light suit.

Emily: Old rose two piece dress. Large natural colored straw hat; bag and gloves.

Mrs. Garrett: Navy blue gabardine suit, tailored hat, bag, gloves.

Ronald: Multi (trousers too tight, sleeves of a T shirt very tight).

Danny: Private's uniform—pressed and shined shoes.

Detective: Derby hat, watch chain, loud salt and pepper suit. Flashy tie. (Chewing gum.)

Act III

(Same as Act II for all other characters)

Martha: Brown tweed suit, gloves, hat, bag and shoes to match. Carries cosmetic case. Straight glamour makeup.

Colonel: Uniform. White hair. Middle-aged makeup.

Kate: Add hat, gloves and bag to Act II costume.

yellow which picked up the lights and gave an effect of cheerful sunlight. The fireplace was bricked with muted tones of gray to give the effect of painted stone. The staircase and rail were painted a dark rose red tone. The backings behind the exit doors were effected by a dull red brick wall three feet high and a recessed backing of hand painted citrus trees and clouds. At the foot of the wall could be seen the muted tones of the earth and these picked up the dull reds of the woodwork. The backing behind the center door, which had galvanized screening for glass, represented a porch. Columns of papier-mâché were used and a striped red and white awning was suspended to the columns. The hall was done in reverse color scheme to the living room using the coral shades of the stencil as the color of the flats and the cadet blue as the stencil. This was done to call attention to the entrance door and to make a more interesting interior. A color of a lighter watermelon shade on the coral tone was used for the valance and drapes and foot stool cover.

Lighting

One thousand watt floodlights were used off stage to represent out-door sunlight. These were arranged to throw some light in from the garden at the side and the back. Striplights were used over the

staircase and over the arch going to the kitchen. The lights were varied in intensity to show changing hours. The gelatine colors in the overhead lights were amber, midnight blue, and red.

Budget

Royalty	\$ 50.00
Books	15.03
Printing: Tickets	6.75
Programs	14.75
Advertising	22.50
Make-up	11.00
Muslin Costumes	6.93
Set Decorations	21.76
Set for Flats	7.50
Wood	17.74
Electrical Equipment	2.84
Paint, nails, glue, screening for windows, brushes, etc.	39.17
Total	\$216.97

Several items such as wood, drapes, etc., represent investments since they can be used again.

Admission was seventy-two cents including tax. Students were admitted for forty-eight cents. Complimentary tickets were given to the faculty, school board, and a few guests. Our auditorium holds under 1,000. The total receipts were \$558.94. Thus a profit of \$341.97 was realized.

Publicity

A special sheet was inserted in the school paper in the edition preceding the play. This contained three cuts of characters. This sheet was also enclosed in a letter to neighboring schools. The town papers carried a story of the play each week for a month preceding it. A large canvas sign was made with the name of the play, the time, and the place. This was tied above the street in the business section of the town. Posters, made by the dramatics club members, were placed in prominent places. Handbills were placed on the counters of the village stores. One ticket was given free to everyone selling twenty-five tickets. Announcements were made by students at meetings of local organizations. At the assembly preceding the play, twenty boys in service uniforms made a dramatic entrance after the assembly had begun. They, of course, aroused attention and placed the audience in a receptive mood to receive the previews planned for the occasion.

Next issue: *Papa Is All*.

Prelude

(Continued from page 13)

Amelia (After a few bars she starts toward the left door.): That must be especially for you. (She screams, then a shot is heard off left followed by the crash of Stephen's body on the piano keys. Amelia runs into the room where he is. She cries for the servants.) William, Stephen's shot himself! William! (She then darts across the stage to the right door.) Alice, come quick! Stephen's dead! Alice! (She darts back through the left door. The "Prelude in A Major" can be heard with Amelia's sobbing off left as the curtain slowly closes.)



Scene from THE OBSTINATE BRIDE

Scene from the recent production of *THE OBSTINATE BRIDE*, presented by Des Moines, Iowa, Community Theater group, under the direction of Hess Sears.

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ON THE HIGH SCHOOL STAGE

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Easton, Pa.

THE production of *The Fighting Littles* on December 6, 7, with the Senior class as sponsors, opened the season of major plays at the Wilson High School (Troupe 247), with Mildred Hahn as director. One-acts given by the dramatics club include *Father Takes His Vacation*, *Mark Twain*, and *Afternoon Storm*. A production of *Harmony Hall* has been scheduled by the Music Department for May 8. Dramatics club meetings are devoted this season to a study of current Broadway plays. One of the highlights of the fall semester was the trip dramatics students made to New York City to witness a performance of *Lute Song*—Joan M. Reber, Secretary.

Cleveland, Ohio

THE major dramatic event of the fall semester at the Garfield Heights High School (Thespian Troupe 448), was the production of *Showboat* on November 15. The next major production was given on December 18 in observance of the Christmas Season. The spring term will come to a climax with the production of the three-act play, *Nine Girls*, on May 8, with Thespians and members of the Spotlight Club as sponsors. Mrs. Florence Fletcher has charge of the dramatics program. —Nancy Knowles, Secretary.

Harlan, Iowa

A BALANCED program of dramatic activities is announced for the current school term by Mrs. Genevieve F. Bredenberg, director and troupe sponsor at the Harlan High School (Troupe 159). The first of two long plays, *Professor, How Could You!* was given under sponsorship of the Junior class on November 15. The other major play, *She's a Soldier's Sweetheart*, will be staged on May 2 with the Seniors as sponsors. A program of three one-act plays, *Life o' the Party*, *Wild Cat Willie Gets Brain Fever*, and *Have You Had Your Operation?*, will be given later this semester as a matinee

performance for the purpose of raising funds for the Thespian troupe. The Music Department gave a musical review for the Christmas Season, and will give the operetta, *The Pirates of Penzance*, on April 8, 9. Dramatics club meetings are given this term to a study of stage settings, make-up, and one-act plays.—Yvonne Christiansen, Secretary.

Cincinnati, Ohio

MEMBERS of Troupe 371 of the Seton High School inaugurated their current dramatics season with the performance of the three-act play, *The First Dance*, directed by Sister Carita. A complete schedule of activities for the year has been outlined by Sister Carita. These projects include the production of a Biblical Christmas play, card party, dance, modern three-act play, formal tea with presentation of awards, and a picnic at the close of the season. Troupe officers for this year are: Katherine Scheller, president; Jean Bauer, vice president; Geraldine Myer, secretary, and Ruth O'Hara, treasurer.

Morrilton, Ark.

OUT OF THIS WORLD was presented by the Junior Class at the Morrilton High School (Thespian Troupe 438) on December 6 as the first major dramatic production of the current season at this school. The play was directed by Mrs. V. H. Merrick, Jr. As their contribution to the fall term in dramatics, Thespians offered the one act play, *A Mind of Her Own*, on November 14, and a Thanksgiving worship program on November 27. Thespians are devoting their meetings to the study of plays and make-up.—Billy Jack Wood, Secretary.

Crossville, Tenn.

THE comedy, *Where's Laurie?* was given with considerable popular success on October 29 at the Cumberland County High School (Thespian Troupe 428), with Ethel W. Walker as director. The fall semester also in-

cluded the presentation of a number of one-act plays, including an original script written by Thespian Clyde Hembree. Dramatic club meetings are devoted to the study of fundamentals of acting and the performance of skits. Articles published in **DRAMATICS MAGAZINE** are used as background for various programs.—Faye Skidmore.

Jamestown, N. Y.

THE Harvest Frolic presented on October 24, with members of Troupe 364 of the Jamestown High School as sponsors, included performances of the following one-act plays: *Gentlemen First*, *Night's Lodging*, *His Best Seller*, *You Can't Fool Aunt Julia*, *Ladies of the Mop*, and *D. 298*. The year's playbill of major productions opened with a performance of *Ramshackle Inn* on November 8, sponsored by the Lyceum. On December 6 the Pretenders followed with a popular performance of *Pride and Prejudice*. The third full-length play, *Double Door*, was staged by Thespians on January 17. The fall term also included a special program, "Twenty-five Years of Drama at J. H. S." presented by the Pretenders. Another interesting and worthwhile event of the fall was the trip made by a number of dramatics students to the drama clinic held on October 26 at the Allegheny College, Meadville, Pa. Miss Myrtle L. Paetznick has charge of dramatics and sponsors the Thespian troupe at our school.—Lorraine Norquist, Secretary.

Wood River, Ill.

MEMBERS of the newly-formed Thespian Troupe 733 of the East Alton-Wood River High School have already established themselves as one of the outstanding student groups in the school and community. For their first major play, they presented the comedy, *Murder at Random*, on December 5, with sponsor L. E. Wiley directing. Thespians also presented the comedy, *Nobody Sleeps*, on October 24 for a school assembly. The Troupe will present its full-length play in April. The spring term at our school will also include an operetta scheduled for performance in March under joint sponsorship of the Music and Dramatics Departments. As added activities of the fall semester, dramatics students attended a dress rehearsal of *Lute Song* at the Roxana High School, and a performance of *You Can't Take It With You* at the Oak Park High School.—Bill McGuire, Secretary.

Hilo, Hawaii

THE formal installation of Thespian Troupe 707 at the Hilo High School was held on

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June 5, 1946, with an audience of some five hundred seniors witnessing the performance. The remainder of the eighteen hundred students heard the ceremony over the public address system. The Thespian pledge was administered to thirty-three charter members, with Mrs. Loleta M. Moir as troupe founder and sponsor. Major play productions in recent years at this school have included *Come Rain or Shine*, *What A Life*, and *And Came the Spring*. This season's schedule of dramatic activities opened with the performance of the one-act, *A Night at an Inn*, on October 31. Earlier in the month, Thespians and dramatics students were entertained at a dinner at Mrs. Moir's summer cottage, and later attended a performance of *Three-Cornered Moon*, given by a U. S. O. group. During November and December dramatics students presented a series of original radio programs promoting the sale of T. B. seals.

Evansville, Ind.

THE entire student body was eligible for try-outs for Thornton Wilder's play, *Our Town*, early in the fall term at the Reitz High School with Mary Louise Williams as director. Two outstandingly successful performances of the play were given on November 18, 19. Members of Thespian Troupe 474 of this school co-operated with the Strut and Fret Dramatic Club in the production of the pageant, *The Nativity*, given in observance of the Christmas Season. Drama Club meetings, held every two weeks this season, are given to a study of current Broadway plays. A number of students attended the drama clinic held at Indiana University on December 7.

Burlington, Wis.

THE fall term included three Thespian dramatic performances at the St. Mary High School (Thespian Troupe 633), with Sister Mary Estelle directing. The first of these performances, a one-act play, *Blue Teapot*, was given on November 10 for the Pastor Name Day program. On November 24, 25, alumni members of Troupe 633 and Thespians presented two popular performances of the operetta, *The Forest Prince*. Equally successful was the Variety Show which Thespians presented to a large audience on December 6. Dramatics classes devoted considerable time to the study of make-up and costumes.—*Joan Degan, Secretary*.

Vincennes, Ind.

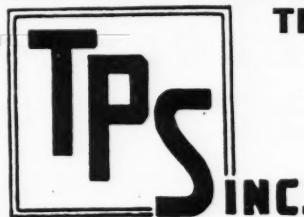
THE Play Shop of the Lincoln High School (Thespian Troupe 548) opened its current season of major plays on November 19 with an impressive performance of the comedy, *Junior Miss*, directed by Miss Elwood Miller, troupe sponsor. The Play Shop's next full-length play is scheduled for April 15. The spring semester will also include the Play Shop performances of one-act plays on February 5, February 21, and April 5. Last season's major plays were *Best Foot Forward*, and *Arsenic and Old Lace*. Both plays were directed by Miss Miller. As the result of participation in these plays, a number of students have qualified for Thespian membership in Troupe 548. *Darlene Cibull, Secretary*.

Middletown, N. Y.

MEETINGS held during the fall semester by dramatics students of the Middletown, N. Y., High school (Troupe 74) were devoted to a study of make-up, stagecraft, business management of plays, and the presentation of humorous and dramatic readings. Three

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A 30 minute drama in one-act by Roger M. Busfield, Jr. 2m., 2w. In this play, we present to our customers one of the most memorable half hours of theatre it has ever been our pleasure to publish. Many young people are separated from the person they love and cannot touch with each other—particularly when the means of communications invented by men fail. Two such young people are involved in this play; Kathy Clark, a young woman deeply in love, and her husband, Lt. John Clark, a young officer in the Marine Corps. When he is ordered overseas, they promise each other to meet in a special corner of their dreams. For a long time they miss all contact—because very simple reasons. However, the desire to fulfil their mutual wishes at the crisis of both their lives, constitutes the sensitive and utterly human story of THE WHITE LAWN. First produced by the experimental theatre, University of Texas, and was later enthusiastically repeated by Angus Springer of Southwestern University, Texas. For a contest play or a short trip into real drama, your group can't go wrong with THE WHITE LAWN. Royalty \$5.00. Five play books furnished free. Additional copies

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By Meyer Hanson. An exceptionally clever short one-act play for 3m., 3w. and two men bit parts. Joan, after taking lessons from Al, wants a license to take a solo flight. She must get her father's permission however, and the play deals with the difficulties in doing so, since Dad is not in the least air-minded. He thinks Al, who by the way, has been generous minded in an auto accident with Dad, is asking to marry Joan. Al, not against his will, seizes the opportunity to "say the word" to Joan. The solo flight is off and dual controls are on. Everyone will enjoy this play. Plays about 30 minutes. 6 copies required for presentation.

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LITTLE ELMER'S PHOTO

A farce in one act for two men and two women. Bill Watkins, photo salesman, tries to deliver a picture of little Elmer to his grandmother—who stands with the baby while his mother is out. The grandmother, vague, hard of hearing and generally difficult, makes it a very trying situation for the poor man. A helpful (?) neighbor woman makes it worse. He tries to explain that if his studio put all the spots in the right color, and truthfully reproduced the ball and the chair that the photo would cost seventy-five dollars. Because Elmer's eyes are "plain blue" instead of "changed blue," and the hair is a "total shade of green" other than the one reproduced, Bill Watkins is reduced to a state of imbecility by curtain time—but he does deliver the pictures. Hilarious 30 minutes of entertainment. Four copies required for production.

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Omaha, Neb.

THE THESPIAN Troupe 680 of the South High School, with Miss Mabel Rasmussen as founder and sponsor, held its second initiation of new members on November 1, with twenty-five students taking the Thespian pledge. An impressive ceremony, attended by parents and friends of the new members, opened with a choric speech selection, after which the initiation took place. The program also included two readings, and closing songs by the acapella choir. A report of dramatic activities sponsored at our school this season will be submitted at a later date.—Anna Plantikow, Secretary.



Scene from the production of *Kind Lady* as given under the direction of Roberta Seibert at the Webster Groves, Mo., High School. (Thespian Troupe 191).

A Vigorous Adult Comedy
You Touched Me!

By TENNESSEE WILLIAMS and DONALD WINDHAM

4 MALES
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First produced by Guthrie McClintic at the Booth Theatre in New York with Edmund Gwenn in the leading role. Tennessee Williams, author of the Broadway smash hit *GLASS MENAGERIE*, cowrote here this trenchant comedy. *YOU TOUCHED ME!* concerns the final triumph of a bibulous old former sea captain over the domination of himself, his daughter, and his adopted son, by a self-righteous and mentally sadistic spinster sister. Although the home in which she lived and ruled and the income on which she thrived in piety and pretensions were her brother's, the unwed female had got the hearty buckaroo under her thumb. The return on a brief furlough of the adopted son revives in the old boy a will to fight for his own survival as a free individual. His chance comes when he senses that a deep love has sprung up between his foster-son and his daughter—a love thwarted by the girl's spinster aunt. The skipper's greatest difficulty lies in over-

coming the fears and reticences that have been instilled in the boy and the girl.

"At long last the new season has produced a play which I can recommend to one and all, wholeheartedly and without serious reservations, as a work of art, edification and entertainment."

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—MISS KATHARINE R. MOE, Studio Theatre School, Buffalo, New York

COME OVER TO OUR HOUSE

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A new play compounded of a mixture of comedy lines, fast and farcical situations, and a worthwhile theme. The story revolves around the Eldridge household. It also revolves, most importantly, around son Jay—serious lad with a great talent for classical music who learns that he also has a flair for boogie-woogie and musical patter. This lands him in the school vaudeville—and a carload of trouble. As the play dances a merry leap-frog of exuberant, youthful fun, it involves his grandmother, his widowed mother's two (no, three) romances, a Hollywood scout and the Russian conductor of the symphony orchestra. The conductor offers a scholarship and the scout offers a Hollywood audition. Dilemma. Of course everyone offers a way out. But Jay, with the help of a stageful of comic absurdities, reaches his own conclusions. The three Eldridge kids, all bent on running their poor mother's life, learn the childishness of their selfishness. A clever, swift and funny show. Ideal for high schools.

IMPORTANT NOTE: The boy who plays the part of Jay does not have to be a musician as the piano is not played.

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Three Blind Dates

A New Three-Act Comedy, By Bettye Knapp
For a Cast of 3 M. 7 W. One Interior.

HERE is a lively, professionally-constructed comedy that is a delight to produce. The distribution of lines is equitable, and there are no unusual problems of any kind. We predict for **Three Blind Dates** the same welcome that awaited Bettye Knapp's other cure for theatrical boredom, **The Inner Willy**, issued last September.

THE PLOT

KATY ELLIS is fed up with Helen Woods' eternal bragging about her brother's popularity and social graces. Where the shoe really pinches is that Katy's brother, George, is about the most unsocial chap alive. Completely absorbed in scientific experiments, George, away for his first year at college, is as impervious to women as an iron post is to BB shot.

With a perseverance born of despair, Katy lays her plans for George's summer vacation at home. She spreads the news among her acquaintances that George has undergone a miraculous change in attitude toward girls; has, in fact, become a veritable man-about-town.

To set the stage for George's triumphal return, Katy—with the help of three eager confederates (the blind dates)—gives George's colorless room the college treatment in a big way. Athletic equipment is everywhere in evidence; girls' pictures clutter up the landscape; even Dave Ellis's pipes (Dave is George's father) are appropriated in order to give the room a manly air.

Deep down in Katy's ambitious little heart, of course, is the gnawing fear that George will blow up when he finds out the trick—blow up like some of the stuff he works with in his darling laboratory. George is, unquestionably, all that Helen Woods says he is: a dim bulb. Socially, that is. Will Katy be able to make him live up to the reputation she has manufactured for him? That's the problem . . . and therein lies the plot.

* * *

GEORGE arrives, pale and purposeful, up to his ears in an experiment that may revolutionize—well, it should revolutionize something. He brings along another eager beaver, Neil Olson. His "colleague," he'd have you know. Well, they practically take over, and the Ellis family has its collective backs to the wall—almost literally. The part of the house that is not turned into a foul-smelling laboratory is jammed with Katy's guests, thrown in as shock troops to break through George's stubborn defenses.

There are a good many other interesting angles to the story, but we'll allow the reader to enjoy the working out of the details. (You'd never in the world would guess what the substance turns out to be when the lost formula is at last recovered and the finished product is an accomplished fact.) . . . The play centers about George Ellis and his sister, Katy, with Neil Olson and Dave Ellis receiving juicy assignments. The female contingent appears early and often, although—aside from Katy and Ada Clark, the talkative and gloomy "date"—the memory load is not heavy.

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Columbus, Ohio

DRAMATICS activities at the Upper Arlington High School promise much in the way of entertainment for this season, according to a recent issue of the "Thespian Newsletter" published by Thespian Troupe 332 under the direction of Mr. Frank Jakes, Jr. The season opened with initiation of five new Thespians on October 21. On November 22, 23, the Junior Class presented two extremely popular performances of *A Date with Judy*. The Senior class play, *Stardust*, went into rehearsal early in December. Plans for the spring term, according to the Newsletter, include the performance of a Thespian play in February, entry in the state play contest, and a children's play with players from the elementary schools appearing in the cast which will be directed by high school students. The Christmas Season was observed with a performance of *Tidings of Joy*, presented in collaboration with the Vocal and Instrumental Music Departments. Thespian Troupe 332 is one of the groups active in dramatics during the summer months.

Knoxville, Iowa

DRAMATICS activities at the Knoxville High School (Thespian Troupe 209) opened for this season with a production of the three-act play, *No Foolin'*, on November 13, with Miss Charline Miller as director. On December 11 Thespians followed with a successful show consisting of the following one-acts: *Another Beginning*, *The Sister McIntosh*, and *Dear Lady, Be Brave*. An interesting phase of study at dramatics club meetings during the fall term has been the making of masks.

Rochester, Minn.

A PERFORMANCE of *Dust of the Road* was included as part of an impressive program presented on November 22 at the Lourdes High School, on the occasion of the formal installation of Thespian Troupe 747 under the sponsorship of Sister M. Theophane. Twenty-five students were received as charter members for the new troupe. Thespians are already well established for a successful season of dramatics activities. The first play after the installation, *Yule Tide at the Court of King Arthur*, was given on December 23. On November 2 a number of dramatics students attended the drama clinic held at the College of St. Catherine in St. Paul. During the fall term students also attended the performance of *Dear Ruth*, the opera, *Hansel and Gretel*, and *Bohemian Girl*, performed in the Rochester Civic Auditorium.—Doris Wildenborg, Secretary.

Alice, Texas

A N extremely varied and worth while dramatics program is being sponsored this season at the Alice High School (Thespian Troupe 24) under the aggressive leadership of Mrs. W. E. Hughes. During October the dramatics club presented two student-directed plays, *If Thoughts Could Speak* and *Madness in Triple Time*, for school assemblies. In November the Dramatics Club offered two additional one-acts, *Afraid of the Dark and Grand Pulls the String*. Dramatics club meetings during the fall term were devoted to a study of character make-up, history of the drama, and types of drama. The year's playbill of major shows opened with a performance of *The Visitor* on November 26. On December 11 the Junior Class presented the comedy, *Don't Take My Penny*. On February 24 the Dramatics Club will stage *Little Women*. The fourth major play, *The Whole Town's Talking*, will be presented by the Senior Class on April 18. Dramatics students are also looking forward to radio broadcasting after the local station begins operation.—Carolyn Castley, Secretary.

Creepy, Pulse-quicken and Frightening

TEN LITTLE INDIANS

By AGATHA CHRISTIE

8 MALES
3 FEMALES
INTERIOR



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As produced by the Ridgewood, N. J., High School

TEN LITTLE INDIANS, a superlative type of mystery comedy, was first produced at the Broadhurst Theatre in New York. It was destined to be a hit because it is that kind of a play—top-notch, fantastic, enjoyable nonsense. When the play opens, eight assorted guests are arriving for a week-end at an isolated country place. On the mantelpiece of this weird house is a cluster of statuettes—the TEN LITTLE INDIANS; embossed above them is the nursery rhyme telling how each little Indian met his death, until there were none. The guests have never met one another before, nor have they met their host. While they are assembled for cocktails, a mysterious voice comes out of the air accusing everyone present, including the two house servants, of murder. Not the sort of murder on which a conviction can be got in the courts, but a murder just the same. One of the ten little Indian

statuettes topples off the mantelpiece and breaks. Immediately thereafter one of the guests chokes to death of poison. One down and nine to go. Or are there? Since you must know what happened to the little Indians and the guests, well only two of each survive the carnage which follows. The excitement never lets up until the final curtain. TEN LITTLE INDIANS is a very fine specimen of the art of writing really good mystery plays. Schools, colleges, and little theatres could not possibly make a better selection. (Royalty, \$50.00)

"The play lends itself admirably as an amateur production. It held the attention of the audience to the end."

—WALTER KIRBY, Ridgewood, N. J., High School

STAR-LIGHT, STAR-BRIGHT

By NANCY MOORE

6 Males, 6 Females (extras if desired). Interior.

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What's New Among Books and Plays

Review Staff:

Mary Ella Bovee, Blandford Jennings, Marion Stuart, Marion V. Brown, Elmer S. Crowley, Robert Ensley, Helen Movius, Roberta D. Sheets.

Reviews appearing in this department aim to help our readers keep up with recent books and plays. Opinions expressed are those of the reviewer only. Mention of a book or play in this department does not constitute an endorsement by *Dramatics Magazine*.

John Luce Company, Boston, Mass.

Three Plays: *The Hostage*, *Crusts*, and *The Humiliation of Father*, by Paul Claudel, translated by John Heard. These plays, as stated by the translator, cover the period between the Revolution and the Franco-Prussian War, and portray through three successive generations of the same family the transformation of France from a semi-feudal to a modern nation. The book as a whole is a piece of great literature in Claudel's masterly style. It should perhaps be better relegated to the sphere of literature than to that of practical drama. Profoundly dramatic, it may be suited to a French audience, but its long psychological excursions into realms of the soul, its long speeches, practically would demand extensive and very skillful cutting for the American stage. *The Hostage* would interest a mature college group, its philosophy and history would add greatly to technical dramatic study, worthy of the highest place on the college stage if it were possible to devote to it the time demanded in order to interpret it.

The "Hostage" is Pope Pius VII, who was lured to France by Napoleon and imprisoned there. Claudel's story of his emancipation is entirely fictitious and romanticized to an impractical degree. The real facts will be found based on contemporaneous documents in Vol. VIII of Artaud de Montor's *Lives and Times of the Popes*, and very interesting reading, at that.

The young woman, Synge, aristocrat, is forced to give up her lover and marry the man, Turelure, once a workman on her ancestors' estates, in order to establish a dynasty wherein the blood of the Old Order shall fuse with that of the new Liberal régime. She is asked to do this, in order to save the life of the Pope who is in hiding and who to her represents the corner stone of King, church, family and land. This is the core of the first play. The second play, *Crusts*, equally powerful though not picturesque, carries out the sex reactions resulting from the first, and the social decadence. The third continues the trail downwards from caste at its finest to individualism and an order of things whose end is not yet. The trilogy would be above and beyond most colleges for stage production. It is worthy of study for its social philosophy, its profound psychology, and its classic beauty. The translation is very fine.—Margaret Manton, Ph.D.

Harper & Brothers, 49 East 33rd Street,
New York City

The Art of Play Production, by John Dolman, Jr. Revised edition, 1945, pp. xvi, 421. \$3.50. This edition loses none of the attractiveness, flavor, and scholarly style which characterized the first edition of well-known book, and will continue to be the outstanding popular book it has been on play production these past years. The new illustrations are excellently chosen and varied. The elaborations of the discussion on scenic art are helpful to the beginner. This reviewer is very glad to see the early chapters retained. He feels that it is essential to make clear the principles of empathy, aesthetic distance and design in planning for a production. Mr. Dolman's book is a convincing argument that staging a play is an art.—Earl W. Blank.

For Your Spring Production

There Was A Merry Prince

Based on Shakespeare's *Henry IV* and *HENRY V*

By Erna Kruckemeyer

Text contains complete notes on historical background, simplified staging, etc. Especially recommended for high schools and colleges.

Non-Royalty

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Love Is Too Much Trouble, a farce-comedy in three acts, by Guernsey Le Pelley. 5 m., 9 w. One interior set. Royalty quoted upon application. This gay little piece of nonsense leans rather heavily toward "stock characters," but it has a certain freshness and spontaneity that is commendable. It concerns the difficulties that pile up out of the "thinking" done by various students of Ivy Gate College, in their favorite hangout, affectionately known as the "Poison Pot." This off-campus spot offers opportunity for the ambitious and original producer in the matter of setting.—Mary Ella Bovee.

Trouble Shooter, a farce-comedy in three acts, by Warren M. Lee. 4 m., 5 w. One interior set. Royalty quoted upon application. The kernel of the plot lies in the rather thin and worn case of "mistaken identity." There is one especially strong role in that of J. S. Wilson, Sr., who sounds a little like Monty Wooley and *The Man Who Came to Dinner*. Both the humor and dialogue are lively and moving; there are no production difficulties; and the play is within reach of any high school group.—Mary Ella Bovee.

Eldridge Entertainment House, Franklin, Ohio.

Quiet, Everybody! a farce-comedy of adolescence in three acts, by Luella Mahon. 8 w., 7 m. Royalty, first performance, \$10; additional performances, \$2.50 each. This play has a rather unusual and attractive setting, which should appeal to the inventive director, since the action takes place on the front porch and lawn of the Horney residence in a small mid-western city. The set itself contains a front door, with upstairs and downstairs windows through which characters poke their heads from time to time. However, provision is made for the small stage, with no room back of the drop. The play is no novelty, being filled with the age-old farce devices, such as mistaken identity, stock characters and "horseplay." Things move along swiftly, propelled by the conflict between a peace-seeking father and a houseful of crazy people. The property list is quite extensive, but not at all discouraging.—Mary Ella Bovee.

Plays for Spring Production

THE STRANGE HOUSE

By Carl Astrid

An electrifying and breath-taking mystery play! Intermingled in this grand thriller are a host of scenes of good, clean fun and hilarity. Every part a good one. 4 m., 7 f. 60c. (Royalty, \$10.00)

COURTIN' DAYS

By Russell Drake

You'll be courtin' success with this brand new comedy containing the funniest courtships on record. 4 m., 8 f. 60c. (Budget Play)

LIFE OF THE PARTY

By Marijane and Joseph Hays

An unusual and worthwhile play by the authors of "And Came the Spring" and "Come Rain or Shine." Studio daughter Jean flings off her glasses and becomes the life of the party! 7 m., 10 f. 85c. (Royalty, \$25.00)

THE SHOW-OFF

By George Kelly

Probably the most brilliant comedy of character by an American dramatist. It has been acted with enormous success from coast to coast. 6 m., 3 f. 85c. (Royalty, \$50.00)

THE FAMILY UPSTAIRS

By Harry Delf

In a typical average American home, Mrs. Heller's humorously misguided efforts to impress daughter's beau almost ruin a promising romance. 4 m., 5 f. 85c. (Royalty, \$25.00)

THE RICH FULL LIFE

By Vina Delmar

A new Broadway release highly recommended for Schools and Little Theatres. "A drama of dignity, sense, and value." *N. Y. World-Telegram*. 3 m., 6 f. 85c. (Royalty, \$35.00)

SPRING GREEN

By Florence Ryerson and Colin Clements

Most often produced by Thespian-Affiliated Schools during the 1944-45 season. Another funny play by the authors of the outstanding *Ever Since Eve* and *June Mad*; about a boy whose father doesn't understand him and a girl whose mother understands her only too well. 8 m., 7 f. 85c. (Royalty, \$25.00)

ANGEL STREET

By Patrick Hamilton

After three solid years on Broadway this Victorian thriller is now available in certain territories. 2 m., 3 f. (2 policemen). 85c. Restricted in a very few places. (Royalty, where available, quoted on application.)

BLITHE SPIRIT

By Noel Coward

From a very novel situation Noel Coward has fashioned a play which is hilarious as only a Coward farce can be. The *New York Sun* stated: "Mr. Coward has never, I think, been happier in his inventions or more adept." 2 m., 5 f. 85c. (Royalty, \$50.00)

CLAUDIA

By Rose Franken

Popular comedy success. Child-wife Claudia meets three crises which lead her into womanhood. Tenderly, humorously told, the story has universal appeal—a big hit! 3 m., 5 f. 85c. (Royalty, \$50.00)

SLICE IT THIN

By Al Moritz and Ed. Heghinian

This Blackfriars Guild success in New York is concerned with the Coleman family and its uproarious entanglement with Hollywood. 5 m., 5 f. 85c. (Royalty, \$25.00)

LITTLE BROWN JUG

By Marie Baumer

Here is a soundly conceived psychological thriller with neat touches of macabre humor. It's creepy, pulse-quickenning and frightening. 4 m., 3 f. 85c. (Royalty, \$25.00)

THERESE

By Thomas Job

This dramatization of the Emile Zola novel is a really first-class murder story. "It becomes an unforgettable experience in play-going." *New York World-Telegram*. 4 m., 4 f. 85c. (Royalty, \$50.00)

THE GIRL WHO LOOKS LIKE ME

By Virginia Mitchell

A brand-new, fast moving, exceedingly funny play that is easy to cast and produce. 3 m., 7 f. 60c. (Budget Play.)

EVERY FAMILY HAS ONE

By George Batson

The eccentric Reardons, overimpressed with their ancestry, are brought sharply to their senses when cantankerous Grandma and a pretty visiting cousin drag skeletons from the closets, causing comic havoc. 5 m., 7 f. 85c. (Royalty, \$25.00)

A FATE WORSE THAN DEATH, OR ADRIFT ON LIFE'S SEA

By Dunston Weed

This wildly funny "meller drayma" gives the audience another chance to hiss the villain and applaud the hero and heroine. It's a take-off on all the old-time melodramas. 5 m., 7 f. 85c. (Royalty, \$25.00)

SEVEN KEYS TO BALDPLATE

By George M. Cohan

A medley of mystery, farce, and intrigue by the ingenious and resourceful George M. Cohan. A writer goes to a mountain inn for a plot, and gets more than he bargained for. 7 m., 6 f. 85c. (Royalty, \$25.00)

GUEST IN THE HOUSE

By Hagar Wilde and Dale Eunson

Into a happy home comes a sweet-faced girl, who is at heart selfish, conniving, and generally cruel. How she almost ruins her kindly hosts makes this a sharply effective play. 6 m., 8 f. 85c. (Royalty, \$35.00)

STORM OVER HOLLYWOOD

By James Reach

A new play of action and thrills with an intriguing and really mystifying plot and many good comedy scenes. 4 m., 7 f. 60c. (Royalty, \$10.00)

BUT FAIR TOMORROW

By Douglas Parkhurst

A comedy of great charm with well developed suspense and a variety of excellent and lovable characters. 5 m., 9 f. 85c. (Royalty, \$25.00)

I LIKE IT HERE

By A. B. Shiffren

A brand-new provocative comedy. Willie Kringle is a refugee who likes it here well enough to set busily about making the ideals of democracy work. 6 m., 3 f. 85c. (Royalty, \$35.00)

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GREEN PASTURES. A cutting from this play won the National, 1946.	.60
HOME TALENT REHEARSEL. Won 6 states.	.60
JUNIOR MISS. From the Broadway success.	.60
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MAN WHO CAME TO DINNER. Hart-Kaufman. From the New York success.	.60
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The Dramatic Publishing Co., 1706 South Prairie Ave., Chicago 16, Ill.

A Date With Judy, a comedy in three acts, adapted from the radio program by Aleen Leslie. 5 m., 9 w. Royalty on application. Judy Foster, that lovable teen-age girl has become a popular radio program for both young and old. Now you have an opportunity to present her with a variety of friends her age, plus a few parents in a fast-moving comedy, with situations provocative of riotous laughter. The story concerns Judy and her girl friend who are determined to solicit the most contributions to the Community Relief Fund and thus win the right for Judy to be Queen and lead the grand march for the dance. Judy's rival, Tootsie, however is winning the contest, which causes Judy to attempt raising some "quick" money. She enters her parents names in a whole raft of contests with disastrous results and ends by writing a "True Confession" story which her mother mistakes for a speech she is sending to the P.T.A. Pandemonium ends Act II, but all ends well as the play closes. The dialogue is fresh and the story is plausible. Here is another play of youth worth your consideration.—*Lillie Mae Bauer*.

Little Miss Somebody, a play in three acts, adapted by Jane Kendall from *Dust of the Earth*, by Katherine Kavanagh. 5 m., 5 w. Royalty \$10.00 minimum. This is a Cinderella story. Poor little Laurie is just a servant in her uncle's family. Her own sweetness wins the friendship of Mrs. Duffy, the cook; Mike, the gardener; Tony, heir to a fortune; and her cousin Richie. Richie has pawned some of the family jewelry in order to buy presents for his girl. Of course, the suspicion falls on Laurie but she is too loyal to tell on Richie. When Tony proposes she refuses to let him marry a nobody like her. Later the mystery of her parentage is cleared up, a fortune is hers and happiness ever after. The plot is a little obvious but moves swiftly; the characterization presents no difficulties for high school students. Those who like a happy ending will be pleased with *Little Miss Somebody*.—*Roberta Dinwidie Sheets*.

Samuel French, 25 West 45th Street, New York, N. Y.

The Strange House, a modern thriller in three acts, by Carl Astrid, 4 m., 7 w. Royalty \$10.00. This up-to-the-minute mystery comedy has a well developed plot which creates and holds suspense. At times the characters and the dialogue seem to weaken the plot. A widower brings home a new bride without telling her that he has been suspected of murdering his first wife. Several attacks are made on the life of the second wife which seem to involve her husband. The plot thickens until without dramatic preparation the real criminal is suddenly revealed to an unsuspecting audience and the whole mystery cleared up to the satisfaction of everyone except the would-be murderer.—*Helen Movius*.

Once in a Blue Moon, a farce in three acts, by Esther Faust, 4 m., 6 w. Royalty \$10.00. This is a play written on the present-day problem, housing shortage. But as it is a farce the action is light and spirited and all situations highly humorous. There is considerable confusion as the various characters rush in and out of an apartment which each one believes he has rented. Cases of mistaken identity pile up, as the action progresses. The setting is easy, the action lively but simple to execute, characters are well-typed. The humorous speeches are rather forced at times, but taken as a whole the play would be a good choice for those desiring a simple plot, fast moving action, and easy characterization.—*Helen Movius*.

Ivan Bloom Hardin Co., Des Moines, Iowa

READINGS:

George's First Cigar, from *Seventeen*, by Booth Tarkington. When George undertakes to smoke a Cuban cigarette after eating an enormous dinner, he succumbs to illness and Willie is left to dance with the lady of his heart. 11 minutes.



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Thunder and Lightning, by George Villiers, adapted by Byron B. Boyd. A humorous reading cut from *Rehearsal*. The playwright asks for criticism of his masterpiece which may be used either as a prologue or as an epilogue. He introduces a dialogue between *Thunder* and *Lightning*, with which he expects to charm his audience. 10 minutes.

The Toiler, by P. L. Dodds. This little humorous monologue consists mainly of a man's reasons for postponing the undesirable task of raking dead leaves from the yard. 7 minutes.

The Critic, a humorous reading cut from the play by Richard Sheridan, adapted by Byron B. Boyd. The action takes place on the stage of an eighteenth century theater where Mr. Puff, a would-be playwright, has taken his friends to witness the rehearsal of his latest tragedy. About 10 minutes.

The Travel Talk, by P. L. Dodds. A humorous monologue describing an illustrated lecture of a tour of England taken ten years before. The speaker has forgotten many of her experiences but she plunges in hopefully. 7 minutes.—*Helen Movius*.

Banner Play Bureau, 449 Powell St., San Francisco, Calif.

It Might Have Been You, a farce-comedy in three acts, by Bonneviere Arnaud. 6 m., 6 w. Royalty \$25. Into the private office of the head of Jordon Book Publishers stream a number of people bent upon getting their books published, as well as employees troubled with the problems of the business. Mr. Jordon clings to the old methods and the old authors, regardless of the fact that the firm faces bankruptcy. His nephew advises dismissing the old writers and seeking present-day big names. Finally, he scores success by effecting a compromise and producing a novel book which becomes a best seller. With much hilarity events move rapidly to an exciting climax.—*Helen Movius*.

The COMEDY FOR YOUR SPRING PRODUCTION

If This Be Bliss

A Brand-New 3-Act Play by the Author of "So Help Me"

Albert Johnson, Director of Cornell College Theatre, has filled a filling station with fascinating characters, entangled them in hilarious situations, and spun a play that is high octane to any cast and audience eager for a flight to laughter. Fast-moving *IF THIS BE BLISS* has a youthful lead who at times pulls at one's heartstrings in the realization of his dilemma. Deck Smith, the troubled one, will soon be eighteen and ready for college—or marriage. Which?

Wise in math, baseball, and gas-station operations, Deck is not wise about women. Spring hits him socko! Spring and Marcella Payne. Finding himself engaged to Marcella, Deck reluctantly abandons college hopes and engineering ambitions, and urged by his fiancée, announces he would like to get married as soon as he turns eighteen.

Mother says, "Nonsense!" Dad Smith takes another line. "So you want to be married, Son," he says. "Well, O.K. But for a week-end I want you to take charge of things here. Mother and I'll take a little vacation. The full responsibility will be in your hands. Service the cars, repair the flat tires, charge the batteries, rent rooms to the tourists—and—your sister Liz may leave Baby Chips with you on Saturday night. When we come back, we'll talk about your plans, Deck—your plans for marriage."

Dad, Mother, and Kid Sister head for the lake. The service station flows over with tourists wanting rooms, a truck driver, a college field man, a pair of irresistible co-eds, Deck's older sister, his insurance selling brother-in-law, his baby nephew, Marcella (his fiancée) with her mother and her three little hellion cousins.

Dutch Kelly, the more irresistible of the two adventure-some co-eds, is stuck with a varsity show. She has to write it or find someone who can. She finds Deck's love poems. She finds music to fit them. More important still, she finds Deck Smith, but in a matrimonial trap that is about to spring.

Does it spring? Does pretty Dutch Kelly know how to handle naive, good-looking chaps like Deck? Does Dad Smith's plan make Deck less or more eager to become a "bring home the bacon" Benedict? Does Deck choose college or Marcella?

Finding the answers to this is an evening's fun you and your audiences won't want to miss. *IF THIS BE BLISS*—read it and you'll itch to present it. One easy, unusual interior; fourteen richly-developed roles (7 men, 7 girls) plus three small parts. It's easy to stage, costume, and prop, and fun to play.

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Photo by C. M. Frank

“‘Our Hearts Were Young and Gay’ is loaded with laughs from start to finish. It’s blithe and bonnie, good and gay!” *Washington Post* review of try-out production.

STORY: Cornelia and Emily, in a frenzy of excitement as they prepare to sail for Europe, are trying desperately hard to appear bored and very accustomed to this sort of thing. The girls are determined to be completely independent. They have saved up their money, and are off on their own—anxious to prove how “mature” they have become. Cornelia pictures herself “a woman in black—a tinge of sadness in her smile—mysteriously alone in the moonlight.” No wonder she’s in agony when her departing mother calls her “Baby” right in front of everyone. But the “good-byes” are said and the ship sails, and the girls are on their own at last. They have an exciting adventure with a stowaway, mistake the leader of the ship’s band for an admiral, take all sorts of fancy sea-sick remedies, and then meet two handsome young medical students. While Cornelia is posing beautifully about her mysterious past, Emily is checking up on the lifeboats. Since she isn’t certain which is hers, she deposits cookies in all of them. Cornelia laughs at that, but then the

fog horn begins to sound, and both girls are ready to leap into life preservers. Emily is frantically trying to recall the swimming strokes she was taught in school. However, the ship is merely nearing port. Cornelia is feeling sick. The medical students immediately diagnose the trouble—measles. At her age! Cornelia is petrified. Emily is convinced that they will be quarantined on the ship. The only thing to do is somehow pass Cornelia by the medical inspector. Cornelia must exercise all the make-up skill she has. The act she puts on in front of the bewildered medical inspector is uproarious. Yes, the girls get by the inspection and are off to Paris. Here, they get involved with a gas meter that explodes, sleep in a bed that Cardinal Richelieu once used, and try to convince a great French actor that he should give them acting lessons. After viewing several roles, he advises them to take in sewing. But he was wrong, and they prove it as their joyous and zestful vacation whirls to a lovely and charming conclusion.

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